Gangaikondacholapuram

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BY

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CONTENTS

I.	The temple and the city	1
II.	Rājēndra the builder	2
III.	Later history	8
IV.	The city then and now	13
V.	The temple	
	(a) Architecture	17
	(b) Sculpture	26
	(c) Bronzes	36
VI.	Minor shrines	38
VII.	Epigraphs	40
VIII.	Literature	55
IX.	Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷan lake	58
X.	Chālukya and Kalinga sculptures in Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram	59
	Bibliography	
	Illustrations	

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I

The temple and the city

Gangaikoṇḍacholapuram, now in the Udaiyarpalayam taluk of Tiruchi district, in Tamilnadu, was created as the capital of the Chōḷas by Rājēndra I, the son and successor of Rājarāja I, the great Chōḷa who conquered a large area in South India at the beginning of the 11th century A.D. It occupies an important place in the history of India. As the capital of the Chōḷas from about 1025 A.D. for about 250 years, the city controlled the affairs of entire south India, from the Tungabhadra in the north to Ceylon in the south. The great temple of Siva at this place is next only to the great temple of Tanjore in its monumental nature and surpasses it in sculptural quality. The city was founded by the eminent Chōḷa emperor probably to commemorate his victorious march to the Ganges and reflected his personality throughout the days of its eminence and continues to do so because of its great temple, though its role as a capital of the south has been forgotten by its inhabitants. It is now a small village, bounded in the west by the celebrated Gangaikoṇḍān lake, one of the biggest lakes in south India, and by the river Vaḍavāru in the east. To the south and the north are fields with a few hamlets bearing names recalling their associations with the greatness of the city. A highway winding its way through this once great city runs north-south leading to the Lower Anicut, while another road cuts across the great lake east-west and connects this village with Jayamkoṇḍachōḷa puram, another Chōḷa foundation about six miles to the west. The lofty tower of the great *prāsāda* could be seen from about a distance of six or seven miles. Besides the great temple and other ancient relics, inscriptions on the temple are our primary source of information for reconstructing the history of the city. Copper plate charters issued by Rājēndra and his successors also give valuable information. A few Tamil literary works like the Thiruvisaippā of Karuvūrdevar, the Kalingattup-paraṇi of Jayamkoṇḍār, the Mūvar Ulā of Ottakkuttar, and the Kōil Oḷugu furnish some data. The Sanskrit work, the Vikramānkadeva Charita of Bilhana on the exploits of Vikramāditya VI, also throws some light. Records dealing with the Udaiyarpalaiyam zamin give some valuable information about the temple and the city.

II

Rajendra the Builder

Gangaikoṇḍa Chōḷa Rājēndra I, was the son of Rājarāja I through his queen, Vānavanmādēvi, also called Tribhuvanamādēvi, evidently a Chēra princess. Ārdra was the star of Rājēndra's nativity.

Rājēndra was a boy when Rājarāja ascended the throne in 985 A.D. Under the care and guidance of his father, he grew up as the most powerful general in Tamil history. When once twenty years old, he led a Chōḷa army into the heart of the Western Chāḷukya kingdom. He was then called Nārmaḍi Chōḷa Rājēndra Vidyādhara and the ornament of the Chōḷa race. In this campaign Rājēndra is said to have advanced as far north as Bijapur District with an army of 900,000 and as a result, territories upto Raṭṭapāḍi were annexed to the Chōḷa empire. He is also identified with Pañcavan Mārāya, who served as the Mahādaṇḍanāyaka of the Vengi and Ganga countries.

Between March 27th and July 7th, 1012 A.D., Rājēndra was chosen heir apparent by Rājarāja. Rājēndra jointly ruled with his father for nearly four years till 1016 A.D., when Rājarāja passed away.

On the state of the empire at the time of Rājēndra's accession, Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the greatest authority on Chōḷa history, writes, "Rājēndra inherited from his father an extensive empire comprising the whole of the modern Madras and Andhra and parts of Mysore and the island of Ceylon. The administration had been carefully organised and a fairly powerful bureaucracy brought into existence, which while it scrupulously respected the 'liberties' feudal and corporate, of the various magnates and associations that studded the land, successfully maintained the king's peace and enforced all civil rights. The army was a strong and tried body of men, well able to defend the wide land frontier and to keep down any threatened outbreaks in areas newly subjected to the empire and ready for aggressive warfare abroad. The hold on Ceylon and some other islands like the Maldive islands was securely maintained by a powerful naval force which also served to protect the considerable overseas trade of the empire with the islands of the East Indies and with

China. During the thirty-three years of his reign, Rājēndra turned these initial advantages to the best possible use and succeeded in raising the Chōḷa empire to the position of the most extensive and most respected Hindu state of his time".

Rājēndra fought many battles and won every one of them. For every victory he gained, he assumed a title commemorating his success. He also conferred titles on his victorious generals. The moment he assumed independent sovereignty, he embarked on a "conquest of the quarters', the *digvijaya*.

The western Chāḷukyas, were probably the first target of his attack. Rājēndra conquered "Iḍaiturai-nāḍu, Banavāsi, encircled by a continous hedge of forest, Kollipākkai whose ramparts were surrounded by sulli trees, and Mannaikkaḍakka whose fortifications were unapproachable, all in a single campaign, directed against Satyāśraya the Chāḷukya ruler. Iḍaiturai-nāḍu was the country between the rivers Krishna in the north and Tungabhadra in the south comprising a large part of the present Raichur District." Koḷlippākkai lies about 45 miles north-east of Hyderabad and is now called Kulpāk. Maṉṉaikkaḍakkam is identified with Mānyakhēda (modern Malkhed). In this campaign, the Chōḷa emperor, crossed the Tungabhadra and attacked the capital of the Chāḷukyas. After completing his successful expedition in the north (north being considered an auspicious direction, expeditions were first taken in that direction for ensuring victories) Rājēndra started on a southern campaign in which he defeated the Pāṇḍyas, the Kēraḷa ruler and finally the king of Ceylon. Of Rājēndra's southern campaign the Thiruvālangāḍu copper charter gives the following account.

"This famous and heroic king, possessed of a powerful army, and bent upon the performance of meritorious deeds with heaps of money acquired by his own arm, then set his heart upon a *digvijaya*.

"Accordingly, after arranging for the protection of his own capital, the unrivalled king Uttama-Chōḷa, first started in the direction marked by Triśanku (the south) desirous of conquering the Pāṇḍya king.

"The commander *daṇḍanātha* of the ornament of the solar race thereupon struck the Pāṇḍya king who had a great force; and the Pāṇḍya abandoned his home in fright and fled for refuge to the Malaya mountain, the abode of Agastya.

"Rājarāja's son the master of policy, took possession of the bright spotless pearls; the seeds of the spotless fame of the Pāṇḍya kings.

"After establishing there his own son Sri Chōḷa Pāṇḍya for the protection of the Pāṇḍya country, the light of the solar race then proceeded to the conquest of the West.

"Having heard of the ignominy sustained by kings at the hands of Bhārgava in battle, this proud king, finding him on the face of the earth, developed a desire to conquer the lands created by him.

"Who else other than this supreme lord (Parameśvara) can entertain the thought in his mind of subjugating the ancient land protected by the glory of the ornament of the Bhṛgukula and free from the inroads of enemies?

"The fearless Madhurāntaka crossed the Sahya mountain and forthwith set upon the Kerala in great force and there ensued a fierce battle which brought ruins upon kings.

"After having conquered the Kerala kings and harrowed the land guarded by the austerities of the lord of the Bhṛigus, the prince returned to his capital, the abode of prosperity".

Both the Pāṇḍya and Kēraḷa countries were placed under the voiceroyalty of his son who was crowned at Madurai, with the title Jaṭāvarman Sundara-Chōḷa Pāṇḍya. Rājēndra is said to have built a palace at Madurai. The Chēra king, Rājasimha, built a temple to Lord Vishṇu at Mannārkoil, naming it Rājēndra Chōla Viṇṇagar after Rājēndra.

Rājēndra then invaded Ceylon. His father had defeated earlier Mahinda V and annexed a major part of Ceylon to the Chōḷa empire and named it Mummuḍi-Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu with many subdivisions called Rājarāja Vaḷanāḍu, Vikrama-chōḷa-vaḷanāḍu etc. Rājēndra's expedition was thorough and complete. His Karandai plates record that "Rājēndra conquered the king of Ceylon with a fierce army and seized his territory, his queen, and her crown, his daughter, all his wealth, his transport, and the spotless garland of Indra, and crown of the Pāṇḍya left in his charge; after having lost the battle and being shorn of his queen, son and other belongings, the king of Ceylon, out of fear, came and sought the two feet of Rājēndra as shelter".

The Ceylonese chronicle, Mahāvaṁśa confirms this account and

states that with Pulattinagara as base the Chōḷas held sway over Rāja raṭṭa as far as the locality known as Rakkhapāsānakaṇṭa .... king Mahinda dwelt twelve years in the Chōḷa land and entered into heaven in the forty-eighth year (from his ascent of the throne)".

Probably Rājēndra personally headed his army and brought the entire island of Ceylon under Chōḷa rule. Towards the end of his reign however, there was an uprising in south Ceylon which was dealt with by his able son, Rājādhirāja I.

Rājēndra next sent his celebrated expedition to the Gangetic plain to bring holy waters to purify his own land, after inflicting crushing defeats on all enemy forces upto Bengal. His Thiruvālaṅgāḍu copper charter states that "the light of the solar race (Rājēndra), mocking Bhagīratha who by the force of his austerities caused the descent of the Ganga,set out to sanctify his own land with the waters of that stream brought by the strength of his arm.

"He seized Sakkarakōṭṭam, whose warriors were brave; Madura-maṇḍalam destroyed in a trice, the prosperous city of Nāmanaikkōnam with its dense groves, Pañcapaḷḷi whose warriors bore cruel bows, Māsuni-dēśa with its green fields, a large heap of family treasures together with many other treasures which he carried away after capturing the Indra-ratha of the ancient race of the moon together with his family in a fight which took place at Ādinagar; a city whose great fame knew no decline, Oḍḍavisaya which was difficult of approach on account of its dense forest defence; the good Kōsalaināḍu, where Brahmins assembled; Taṇḍabhutti, in whose gardens bees abounded, after having destroyed Dhammapāla in a hot battle; Takkaṇalāḍam whose fame reached all directions and which he occupied after forcefully attacking Raṇasūra; Vangāladēśa where the rain water never stopped and from which Govindachandra fled, having descended from his male elephant; elephants of rare strength, women and treasure which he seized after having been pleased to put to flight in a hot battlefield the strong Mahīpāla by the sound of a conch from the deep sea; Uttaralāḍam on the shores of the expansive ocean producing pearls and the Ganga whose waters bearing fragrant flowers dashed against the bathing places".

Rājēndra's father had integrated the Eastern Chāḷukya kingdom of Vengi politically and dynastically with the Chōḷa line. As a result of Rājēndra's expedition all the countries north of Vengi, which included

Kalinga, Oḍḍa, Southern Kōsala, the lower and upper Lāḍa and finally the Vangāḷadēśa (Bengal) were made to bow before the might of this Chōḷa emperor. Rājēndra himself went upto the banks of the Gōdāvari, where he awaited the return of his triumphant army, which brought Ganges water in golden vessels, carried on the heads of the vanquished rulers.

Almost a thousand years before Rājēndra, a Chēra king of the Sangam age, Senguṭṭuvan had marched upto the Himalayas with an army to bring a stone to carve an image of Goddess Pattini, which he enshrined in a temple erected for the purpose. Two northern kings are said to have opposed Senguṭṭuvan's march, but they were vanquished in a trice and made to carry the stone on their head. This account is recorded in the Silappadhikāram. Some critics doubt its authenticity. But Rājēndra's expedition was an important landmark. According to R.D. Banerjee, "the invasion of the great southern conqueror, Rājēndra Chōḷa I, seems to have left a permanent mark in Bengal. Some obscure Karnāṭa chief seems to have followed Rājēndra and settled in West Bengal. From him was descended Sāmantasena, who is generally taken to be the founder of the Sena dynasty". To commemorate this celebrated victory, Rājēndra assumed the title of Gangaikoṇḍa Chōḷa, a name given not only to his new capital (Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram) but also to his temple.

The conquest of the overseas island of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula forms the most important event in the life of Rājēndra and perhaps in the annals of South Indian history. This triumphant naval expedition was directed against the ruler of Srīvijaya who also held sway over Kaḍāram.

Rājarāja had cordial relations with Srīmāra Vijayōttunga-varman, the ruler of Srīvijaya who visited the Chōḷa country and erected a Buddhist vihāra in the name of his father for which Rājarāja gifted lands and money. After his father's death Rājēndra confirmed the grant to this Vihāra. But the relationship became strained subsequently. Either the flourishing overseas trade of Chōḷas was obstructed or Rājēndra having conquered the countries in the north, west, and south wished to conquer the east, to complete his *digvijaya*. The Nicobar islands, the upper and lower Sumatran islands known as Ilāmuridesa, Srīvijaya, Singapore, the Malay peninsula and the lower part of Burma were subjugated. A number of places where he fought are detailed in Rājēndra's Tamil inscriptions.

'Rājēndra having despatched many ships in the midst of the rolling sea and having caught Sangrāma Vijayōttunga Varman, the king of Kaḍāram, together with the elephants in his glorious army, took the large heap of treasuries which that king had rightfully accumulated, captured with noise, the arch called Vidyādhara tōraṇa at the war-gate of his extensive city. Srīvijaya with the jewelled wicked gate adorned with great splendour and the gate of large jewels; Paṇṇai with water in its bathing ghats; the ancient Malaiyūr with the strong mountain for its rampart; Māyiruḍingam surrounded by the deep sea as by a moat; Ilangāsōka (Lankāsoka) undaunted in fierce battles; Māppālam having abundant deep water as defence; Māveḷimbangam having fine walls as defence; Vaḷaippandūru having Vaḷaippandūru; Talāittakkolam praised by great men (versed in) the sciences; Mādamālingam, firm in great and fierce battles; Ilāmuridēśam whose fierce strength rose in war; Mānakkavāram in whose extensive flower gardens honey was collecting; and Kaḍāram of fierce strength which was protected by the deep sea'.

For a detailed account of Rājēndra's conquest of Kaḍāram and the identification of the various battlefields of the campaign, the reader may refer to Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri's 'The Chōlas'. To commemorate his signal victories Rājēndra assumed the title of Kaḍāramkoṇḍachōḷa. Rājēndra thus completed a brilliant *digvijaya* "conquest of quarters', which made him a Chakravarti.

"The closing years of Rājēndra's reign formed the most splendid period of the history of the Chōḷas of the Vijayālaya line. The extent of the empire was at its widest and its military and naval prestige stood at its highest. There remained the necessity ever present in military empires of carrying out punitive expeditions to suppress out breaks and keep the conquered territories under control. The emperor was ably assisted by his talented sons and other members of his family and the tasks of imperial administration were thus put in commission".

Rājēndra had many titles like Madhurāntaka, Uttamachōḷa, Vīrachōḷa, Muḍikoṇḍachōḷa, Paṇḍitachōḷa, Gangaikoṇḍachōḷa, Gangaiyum Pūrvadēśamum Kadāramum koṇḍa Ayyan. He had many queens of whom Vānavanmādēvi, Mukkōkiḷān, Pañcavanmādēvi and Vīramādēvi deserve mention. The last mentioned entered the funeral pyre with her husband at his death.

III

Later history

The first Chōḷa king to be crowned at Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram was Rājakēsari Rājādhirāja I, the eldest son of Rājēndra I. He had been installed as crown prince very early in Rājēndra's reign (1018 A.D.) and till his death in 1054, he led a life of warfare. He is probably identical with Sundara Chōḷa Pāṇḍya, who was installed as the viceroy of the Pāṇḍya country in his father's reign. He quelled a rebellion in Ceylon, conquered a Pāṇḍya who fomented trouble, and dealt severely with the ruler of Vēnād. In the north he led three expeditions against the Chāḷukyas, ransacked Kalyāṇapura, their capital, and captured Kollāpura. To commemorate this victory he assumed the title, Kalyāṇapuramum, Kollāpuramum koṇḍa Vijayarājēndra. A few sculptures of exceptional beauty were brought by him as war trophies from Kalyāṇapura. One of the sculptures bears an inscription recording the fact that it was brought by Vijayarājēndra from Kalyāṇapura after its conquest. Evidently, the sculptures of Durga, Ganesa, and the solar pīṭha now in Gangaikoṇḍa chōḷapuram, was also brought home. Rājādhirāja performed the asvamedha, to celebrate his signal victories. In 1054, at an advanced age, he led his army against the Chāḷukyas and fought a battle at Koppam, on the banks of the Tungabhadra. Rājādhirāja was mortally wounded while seated on his elephant. The Chōḷa army fell into disarray and began to retreat in great confusion. The Chāḷukya army pressed forward with great force. Rājādhirāja's younger brother, Rājēndra II, who was stationed behind, marched forward at great risk. The Chōḷa army regrouped itself and followed its master. Rājēndra was wounded in the thigh and lost some of his close associates. Nothing daunted, Rājēndra moved forward, killing many able Chāḷukya generals. The Chāḷukya army was shattered. Sōmēsvara, the Chāḷukya king, fled. Many able Chāḷukya warriors lost their life or were taken prisoners. Thus Rājēndra converted an almost imminent defeat into a brilliant success. As if to commemorate this brilliant success, Rājēndra crowned himself king on the battlefield, while his wounds were still fresh on his body. Thus the second son of Rājēndra I was crowned not at Gangaikoṇ achōḷapuram, his capital,

but on the battlefield. Rājādhirāja came to be called 'the elder brother who lost his life on an elephant'.

Rājēndra II was succeeded by his younger brother Vīrarājēndra, who also won victories over the Chāḷukya after winning a decisive battle against the Kalyāṇi Chāḷukya, Vikramāditya. Vīrarājēndra gave his daughter in marriage to him. The earliest epigraph found on the temple belongs to the reign of Vīrarājēndra. The epigraph records the issue of orders by Vīrarājēndra confirming the gifts made by his father Rājēndra I, and elder brother Rājādhirāja I.

After Vīrarājendra passed away, his son Adhirājēndra ascended the throne. He was quite friendly with his brother-in-law. Adhirājēndra was a weak ruler, while Vikramāditya was shrewed and able. The trained and seasoned Chōḻa generals saw a danger to the Chōḻa empire in this alliance. They refused to accept Adhirājendra. The Chōḻas always chose not the eldest son, but the ablest as their successors. The Chōḻa generals were guided by this principle. But Vikramāditya came to the rescue of Adhirājēndra. Marching on Kāñchi, he punished those who rebelled there and reaching Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram, crowned his brother-in-law as Chōḻa king. He stayed there for two months to make the position of Adhirājēndra secure and then returned to his capital. As soon as Vikramāditya left Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram, the Chōḻa generals rebelled and in the uprising Adhirājēndra lost his life.

Ammaṅgādēvi, a daughter of Rājēndra I was married to the Eastern Chāḷukya ruler, Rājarāja Narēndra. Their son was named Rājēndra, the future Kulōttuṅga. From Kaliṅgattupparaṇi, a heroic poem composed on him by Jayaṁkoṇḍār, it is learnt that Kulōttuṅga was born and brought up in Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram. He had his education, military and other training and was crowned Yuvarāja by Vīrarājēndra at Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram. At the time of the uprising, at Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram Kulōttuṅga was waging a war in the north. He at once rushed to Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram. The Chōḻa generals found in him a capable ruler, crowned him Chōḻa emperor in the name of Kulōttuṅga. He immediately restored peace in the kingdom. A fragmentary inscription mentioning his mother Ammaṅgādēvi is preserved in the Gangaikoṇḍachōḻapuram temple. One of his inscriptions is also found in the temple. It refers to a gift of land to some other temple. An inscription dated in his 41st regnal year, in the temple gives the *prasasti* of a Gāhaḍavāla king of Kanauj. The inscription does not

give the name of the ruler or the nature of gift, as it is left unfinished. But according to K. A. N. Sastri it should be assigned to either Madanapāla or his son, Gōvindachandra of Kanauj. It points to some dynastic connection between the Gāhadavālas and the imperial Chōḷas. The Kalingattupparaṇi a contemporary poem on Kulōttunga refers to Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram as Gangāpuri. Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram continued to be the capital of the successors of Kulōttunga. Thus Vikrama Chōḷa, Kulōttunga II, Rājarāja II, Rājādhirāja II and Kulōttunga III retained it as their capital. There are a few fragmentary records of Kulōttunga III in the temple.

Kulōttunga III was the last of the great Chōḷa emperors. He won signal victories against Ceylon, Madurai, and Karuvūr (the Chēras) and assumed the title of Conqueror of Madurai, Karuvūr and Īḷam. However, towards the close of his reign, the dynamic Māṛavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya humiliated him. He invaded the Chōḷa country and razed Tanjore and Uṛandai to the ground and performed the Vīrābhishēka at Āyirattaḷi and reached as far as Chidambaram. It is not known whether Sundara Pāṇḍya captured Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. At any rate, it is not mentioned in his inscriptions. The humiliation marked the beginning of the decline and fall of the Chōḷa empire and with it of the Chōḷa capital.

Kulōttunga III did not live long after this defeat and was succeeded by an inefficient son Rājarāja III. The latter was driven out of his capital by the Pāṇḍya and tried to escape to the north to join the Kuntalas, (the Hōysalas of Mysore) but was intercepted by the Pallava chieftain, Kōpperuñjinga probably at Teḷḷāṛu where Rājarāja was made a captive. Hōysala Narasiṁha succesfully intervened and defeated the Pāṇḍya in the south. Hōysala generals captured Kōpperuñjinga's territory and released the Chōḷa. Rājarāja III was recrowned at Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. It is not known whether the city suffered on account of these wars. However the contemporary works speak of Muḍikoṇḍachōḷapuram as the Chōḷa capital. Probably Rājarāja III had a preference for that place though Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram continued to be of importance.

Jaṭāvarman Sundara, who ascended the Pāṇḍya throne in 1251, conquered territories upto Nellore and kept the Chōḷas under subjection. Probably the Chōḷa was paying tribute to him. One of Sundara's inscriptions is found in the Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram temple dated in his second regnal year. Evidently, he captured the city in his very first regnal year. Sundara established a special worship named after him in the

temple. Vikrama, who shared the Pāṇḍya throne with him, has left an inscription in the temple.

Sundara was succeeded by Māṛavarman Kulaśēkhara, another able ruler in 1268 A.D. He defeated and probably killed the last Chōḷa Rājēndra III, in Kaṇṇanūr in 1279. Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram was included in his dominion and two inscriptions of him are found in the temple. After the death of Kulaśēkhara, in 1310 the Tamil country was invaded by Malik Kafur, a Muslim general and there was anarchy and confusion for a year. The Pāṇḍya hold on Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram seems to have been weakened though they continued to hold sway in a nominal way over this part of the country.

In 1365, Kumāra Kampaṇa, the Vijayanagara viceroy marched as far as Rāmēśvaram and brought the southern country under his control. There are no records of any of the Vijayanagara rulers till 1463, nearly a hundred years after Kampaṇa's conquest. There is a record of Thiruvēṇgaḍamuḍaiyān Ekāmranātha Gāṅgēyan dated 1463, who probably was a subordinate of the Vijayanagara ruler Mallikārjuna. An inscription of Prauḍa Virūpāksha, the son of Mallikārjuna dated in 1483, is in the temple. This proves that Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram was in the Vijayanagara empire. An inscription of Krishṇadēva, in Tirthanagari (South Arcot) dated in 1517, records that the king gifted tax-free lands to many Siva and Vishṇu temples in the Chōḷamaṇḍalam. Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram temple is amongst them.

In the early part of 16th century Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram was brought under the Uḍaiyārpāḷaiyam subdivision which became the seat of Arasukāvalar, also called poligar. They were local chieftains who acted as the subordinates of the Vijayanagar emperors. They were to keep in perpetual readiness certain number of elephants, cavalry and foot soldiers to march against any army when called upon. For this purpose they were allotted certain revenue from a number of villages, assigned to them. Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram thus became a part of Uḍaiyārpāḷaiyam subdivision.

After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire, the poligar of Uḍaiyār pāḷaiyam continued to hold an important position in the area. In 1756 the French invaded Uḍaiyārpālaiyam and forced the Poligar to pay a tribute of 40,000 Rupees. In 1765, the Nawab assisted by a party of English attacked the forts of Uḍaiyārpāḷaiyam. During these battles,

Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram temple was probably used as a fort and considerably suffered damage. The bastions now found outside the enclosure walls in the west were probably erected during these wars. The district of Thiruchirappaḷḷi was handed over to the British East India Company in 1801 when the poligar of Uḍaiyārpāḷaiyam was paid an allowance of Rs. 1000. The estate was brought under the management of an agent of the Nawab. In 1817 the British Government restored a portion of the Polliam to the Poligar subject to a nominal *Peshkist* and gave him a zamindari *sunnad.* However Gangaikoṇḍa chōḷapuram was excluded from it.

The greatest damage to the temple was done in 1836, when a dam was erected across the Collidam about seven miles from the temple. For the supply of stones of the construction, some vandal members of the public works department pulled down the enclosure walls, the dilapidated gopura, the front and great maṇḍapa and carried away the stones.

An interesting account published in a local publication of 1855 and reproduced in the Indian Antiquary IV, page 274, states that 'speaking of the noble temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram it must not be omitted that when the lower Kolerun *anikat* was biult, the structure was dismantled of a large part of the splendid granite sculptures which adorned it and the enclosing wall was almost wholly destroyed in order to obtain materials for the work. The poor people did their utmost to prevent this destruction and spoilation of a venerated edifice by the servants of a government that could show no title to it; but of course without success; they were only punished for contempt. A promise was made indeed that a wall of brick should be built in place of the stone wall that was pulled down; but unhappily it must be recorded that this promise has never been redeemed.'

IV

The city then and now

There is an interesting reference in the Silappadhikāram, a post Sangam classic, to the foundation of Uraiyūr as a capital of the Chōḷas of the Sangam age. A cock is said to have attacked and chased away an elephant at Uraiyūr. This inspired the Chōḷa king to make Uraiyūr his Metropolis, for he believed that the inhabitants of that place would be heroic and valorous as the cock. A similar story of a rabbit chasing away a hound is told of the foundation of Pāñchālamkurichi, the capital of Virapāṇḍiya Kaṭṭabomman, who defied the British in late 18th century A. D.

If these traditions are of any value, they indicate that a place which inspired a ruler to attain phenomenal success, was honoured by being made capital of the ruler, who cherished sentimental attachment to it. Only thus can we explain for the foundation of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram, the capital of the imperial Chōḷas from the eleventh century. Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram was unheard of even as a village when Rājēndra I came to the Chōḷa throne. Tañjāvūr had been the Chōḷa capital eversince it had been captured from the Muttaraiya Chieftains by Vijayālaya, who founded the imperial line of the Chōḷas in the middle of ninth century A. D.

Tañjāvūr served the interests of the Chōḷas well. It was well fortified and adorned with palaces and mansions; it was there that Rājarāja I had built the great temple; it was from there that he had brought for the first time the entire southern India under one parasol. Yet within few years of the erection of the great temple and within few years of his passing, his son, Rājēndra shifted his capital to Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram.

Was this because Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram served strategic purposes better than Tañjāvūr (but Tañjāvūr had better claims with its fortifications and natural river barriers)? No answer is possible except for a suggestion that it was probably here that Rājēndra resolved to despatch a military expedition to the Gangetic plain.

The city of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram was probably founded by Rājēndra before his 17th regnal year as it is mentioned in one of his inscriptions of that year. Judging from the available literature and the remains we may conclude that it was an extensive city, carefully planned and laid in accordance with the architectural treatises to suit the needs of a capital, *rājadhāni*. The city seems to have had two fortifications, one inner and the other outer. The outer was probably wider. The villagers point to a mound running all around the palace as the outer fortification. Systematic brick robbing has been going on in this place. It is probable that the outer fortification built of burnt bricks, was about six to eight feet wide. It consisted of two walls, the intervening space (the core) being filled with sand. The bricks are fairly large in size and are made of well burnt clay. A fortification at this place called *Rājēndra Chōḷan Madiḷ* (the fort wall named Rājēndra Chōḷa) evidently after the builder, is mentioned in an inscription. This fortification might be identical with this outer wall. The inner fortification was around the royal palace, probably identical with the *Uṭpaḍai viṭṭu madiḷ* of the inscriptions.

The royal palace also was built of burnt brick. The ceilings were covered with flat tiles of small size, laid in a number of courses, in fine lime mortar. The pillars were probably made of polished wood, supported on granite bases; a few pillar bases have survived to this day. Iron nails and clamps have been recovered from this palace site.

In the reign of Vīrarājēndra, Rājēndra's third son, the palace at Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram is referred to as Chōḷa-Kēraḷan Thirumāḷigai (Chōḷa Keraḷan palace) evidently after one of the titles of Rājēndra I. The same inscription mentions a few parts of the palace as *ādibhūmi* (the ground floor), *Kīḷaisōpāna* (the eastern portico), and a seat named *Māvali vānādhirājan*. Evidently the palace was multistoried. In an inscription dated in the 49th year of Kulōttunga (1119 A.D.) reference is made to Gangaikoṇḍachōḷamāḷigai at this place. It is likely that there were more than one royal building each having its own name.

Besides the names of the palace and fort walls, the names of a few roads and streets are preserved in the epigraphs. Two entryways named *Thiruvāsal*, the eastern gate and the Vēmbuguḍi gate, evidently the south gate leading to the village Vēmbuguḍi situated in that direction are mentioned. Reference is also found to highways named after Rājarāja and Rājēndra as *Rājarājan Peruvaḷi* and *Rājēndran Peruvaḷi*.

Other streets mentioned in epigraphs are the ten streets (*Pattu teru*), the gateway lane (*Thiruvāsal Nārāsam*) and the Suddhamali lane.

Probably in the reign of Kulōttunga, the fortifications were renewed and the city underwent some alterations and additions. An epigraph refers to the fort wall of Kulōttunga Chōḷa (*Kulōttunga Chōḷan Thirumadiḷ*). The inscription also refers to the highways, *Kulōttungachōḷan Thirumadiḷ peruvaḷi*, *Vilāngudaiyān Peruvaḷi* and *Kūḷaiyānai pōna Peruvaḷi* (the highway through which a short elephant passed by). The strengthening of the fortification and additions to the city in the reign of Kulōttunga I were probably necessitated by the uprising which led to the murder of Chōḷa king Adirājēndra, Kulōttunga's predecessor.

The epigraphs also refer to the Madhurāntaka Vaḍavāṛu, now called the Vaḍavāṛu, running about three miles east of the ruined capital. Madhurāntaka Vaḍavāṛu evidently named after one of the titles of Rājēndra I, was a source of irrigation to a vast stretch of land bordering the capital. An irrigation channel called *Ānaiveṭṭuvān* (destroyer of elephants) *Kāl* is also mentioned.

There were both wet and dry lands inside the Fort, used for cultivation and other purposes. The present positions of the existing temples throw some light on the lay out of the city. With the palace as the centre to the city, the great temple, and the other temples in the city seem to have been erected. Towards the north-east (*Īsānya*) of the palace is the gaeat temple of Śiva. The Śiva temple according to Vāstu and Āgamic texts should be in the north-east of the city or village and should face east. Till recent times, the local people say an image of Vishṇu with his consorts was in *situ* to the west of the palace. The temple of Vishṇu should be in the west. To the south-east of the palace is a temple dedicated to Aiyanār (Śāsta). Obviously there should have existed other temples as prescribed in traditional treatises.

A few villages lying mostly to the east of the temple bear names that recall their association with the original layout of the city. Thus Vīrachōḷapuram, Kollāpuram, Meykāvalputhūr, Vānavanallūr, Vīrabhōgha etc., are of interest.

A number of small tanks and ponds mentioned in inscriptions and retained in tradition, supplied drinking water to the residents, besides

a number of wells. Most of the Chōḷa kings who succeeded Rājēndra were crowned here. They retained it as their capital; reoriented and trained the efficient Chōḷa army. This capital of the most powerful empire in Asia at one time is now absolutely desolate only the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷa survives. To those who know of the brilliant history of the Chōḷa empire it is a tragedy.

What caused the destruction of this city? The Pāṇḍyas who put an end to the Chōḷa empire late in the 13th century, avenging their earlier defeats at the hands of the Chōḷas, should have razed the city to the ground, a misfortune that befell on capitals in early times. It should have remained a heap of brick debris, the inhabitants of the nearby villages pilfering the bricks for their constructions. The people have also dug systematically deep into the ground and extracted cartloads of ancient bricks, at four annas per cartload. The residents boast that within a radius of five miles, no brick kiln is needed.

V

The temple

(A) Architecture

The temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷīśvara is approached through the northern entrance from the road. The passage passes through the enclosure wall and leads on to the inner court. As one steps in, the great *Vimāna* arrests the visitor's sight. The *Vimāna* with its recessed corners and upward movement presents a striking contrast to the straight-sided pyramidal tower of Tañjāvūr. As it rises to a height of 160 feet and is shorter than the Tañjāvūr tower, it is often described as the feminine counterpart of the Tañjāvūr temple. The *Vimāna* is flanked on either side by small temples; the one in the north now housing the Goddess is fairly well preserved. The small shrine of Chaṇḍikēśvara is near the steps in the north. In the north-east are a shrine housing Durga, a well called lion-well (*simhakēṇi*) with a lion figure guarding its steps and a late *maṇḍapa* housing the office. Nandi is in the east facing the main shrine. In the same direction is the ruined *gōpura*, the entrance tower. The main tower surrounded by little shrines truly presents the appearance of a great *Chakravarti* (emperor) surrounded by chieftains and vassals. The Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram *Vimāna* is undoubtedly a *dēvālaya chakravarti*, an emperor among temples of South India.

The enclosure

Though the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram follows the plan of the great temple of Tañjāvūr in most details it has an individuality of its own. From the remains it may be seen that it had only one enclosure wall and a *gōpura* while the Tañjāvūr temple has two *gōpuras* and enclosures. The *prākāra* follows the Tañjāvūr lay-out in that it had a two storeyed cloister running all around. Only a part of this has survived in the north. The stones from the other portions were utilised to build the Lower Anaicut across the Kollidam. The pillars of cut stone are severely plain throughout as in Tañjāvūr. They have no inscription unlike at Tañjāvūr. The courtyard is 566'9" in length and 318'6" width and has a transept at the west in line with the main sanctum. The cloister has a raised platform, 18' in height. At regular intervals, bases for shrines are noticed.

These shrines should have resembled the *prākāra* shrines of Tañjāvūr and in all probability housed the images of the eight directional deities, in their appropriate quarters as in Tañjāvūr. However none of the images have survived. Evidently the *prākāra* has been laid out in the traditional Vāstu grid system called *Vāstupadavinyāsa.*

The Gōpura

The entrance tower, the superstructure of which has completely fallen down, is located in the east. It measures about 68′ x 46′ with a 12′ entry way. It followed in pattern the outer *gōpura* of the Tañjāvūr temple, with no sculptures on its base except for the Dvārapālas. The stones from the ruined *gōpura* were removed to construct the dam mentioned earlier. In the temples of Tañjāvūr, Dārāsuram and Tribhuvanam, there are two *gōpuras,* the outer being taller than the inner. But in Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram there is only one *gōpura,* at the east. Besides this eastern entrance an entrance is provided in the northern enclosure, which now serves as the main entry on account of its proximity to the main road.

Dr. James C. Harle in his excellent work the 'Temple gateways in South India' states that "the *gōpura* of the great temple at Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram (A.D. 1030) belongs as far as one can tell in its present ruined state to the same early phase of development as the Tañjāvūr *gōpuras.* It was neither as large or as complex, however, as the Tañjāvūr *gōpuras.* On plan, the whole edifice forms a rectangle approximately 60 feet by 33 feet. Large dvārapālas were placed on the outer facade. One of them now lies on the ground in front of the *gōpura* and measures atleast seven feet. The unique *dvāra,* as at Tañjāvūr, is on the outerside of the entryway. The vestibules have two storeys, divided by a crude and massive architrave; in the lower, an exposed stair is built against the back wall; above a doorway in the same wall may have led either to another stairway or to a circumambulatory corridor."

Dr. Harle further states that an early photograph (photo No. 2452 Indian Museum, Calcutta) shows the three upper storeys of the *gōpura,* in a dilapidated condition.

A fairly large size bull is found on a pedestal inside the court, facing the main sanctum. It is made up of fallen stones and stucco. It is not known whether the original one was monolithic. A *bali pīṭha* is found east of Nandi.

The building to the north of Nandi, called *Alankāra maṇḍapa*, and now housing the executive office of the temple was in all probability constructed in the 19th century.

The Siṁhakēni

To the north of this *maṇḍapa* is a circular well with steps provided at the western end. The entrance of the steps is adorned with a lion figure which has given the name to the well. According to tradition Rājēndra poured a part of the Ganges water, brought from his famous expedition, into the well, to sanctify it. An inscription on the lion sculpture, in 19th century characters, records that it was constructed by the Zamindar of Uḍaiyārpāḷaiyam.

The Mahishāsuramardini Shrine

To the west of the lion-well is a shrine dedicated to the Goddess, Mahishāsuramardini. The shrine is a later structure (probably built in 14-15th Century) and did not form part of the original layout. It consists of a sanctum preceded by a *maṇḍapa*. The Goddess installed in the sanctum is similar to a Durga found at Veerareḍḍi street, in the same village and is in all likelihood, Chāḷukyan in origin.

The Southern Kailāsa

The shrine, south of the main *Vimāna* and called the southern Kailāsa has a sanctum preceded by a *maṇḍapa* which in turn is fronted by flights of steps from south and north of which the basement alone remains. The outer walls of the sanctum and the front *maṇḍapa* carry niches, housing images. The niches of the sanctum carry Dakshiṇāmūrthi in the south and Lingōdhbhava in the west, while the niche on the north is empty. The niches on the front *maṇḍapa* carry in the south Gaṇēśa, Naṭarāja, Bhikshāṭaṇa, and Subrahmaṇya and in the north, Gaurīprasāda, Durga, Ardhanāri and Bhirava. The inner sanctum of the shrine is now in ruins.

A little to the north-east of this temple is a granite basement, probably the ruin of a *maṇḍapa*. It is now called the *Alankāra maṇḍapa*. To the west of this is a well, probably coeval with the temple.

To the south-west of the main temple, is a small shrine dedicated to Gaṇēśa. It has a sanctum preceded by a maṇḍapa. The structure could be assigned to the 13th century on stylistic grounds.

The temple of Goddess (Northern Kailāsa)

To the north of the main temple is a small shrine now housing the Goddess, Bṛhannāyaki, the consort of Lord Gangaikoṇḍachōḷīśvara. The temple, as mentioned earlier, resembles the southern Kailāsa in every aspect and is called Uttara Kailāsa. It has a sanctum, preceded by a front *maṇḍapa*, provided with side-steps. In front of this is a bigger *maṇḍapa* (*mahāmaṇḍapa*), which is well preserved, unlike its southern counterpart. The niches on the sanctum and the front *maṇḍapa* carry the same sculptures as in the southern Kailāsa. Thus Gaṇēśa, Naṭarāja, Bhikshāṭaṇa, Subrahmaṇya, Dakshiṇāmūrti, Lingōdhbhava, Brahma, Bhairava, Ardhanāri, Durga, and Gaurīprasāda are noticed in order, from the south, while in the southern Kailāsa, the northern niche of the *garbhagṛha* is empty, a sculpture of bearded Brahma is noticed in this temple. Two gatekeepers flank the entrance. In front of the gatekeepers, in the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, are images of Saraswati in the north and Gajalakshmi in the south. These two Goddesses, Lakshmi and Saraswati, occupy the same position in the main temple and also in the great temple of Tañjāvūr. They occupy these positions to suit some ritual needs. It is significant that the *mahāmaṇḍapa* has steps to it only on the side. In ancient times, steps were always provided on the sides and not in front of the sanctum. The beautiful image of Goddess now enshrined in the sanctum of this temple should be a later instalation. Originally the temple should have enshrined a Śiva Linga, like the southern Kailāsa. Though seperate shrines for Goddesses came to be built in the main temples only from the reign of Rājēndra I, no Devi-shrine was built originally in this temple, the present one being clearly a later institution.

The Chaṇḍikēśvara shrine

The little temple to the north-east of the central shrine enshrining Chaṇḍikēśvara, the steward of Śiva temple is of interest. It is an all stone temple built on a raised basement, with a storeyed superstructure. The sanctum is approached by side steps. Inside the sanctum is an image of Chaṇḍikēśvara, coeval with the temple. The outer walls of this sanctum have niches on all the three sides, carrying sculptures of Chaṇḍikēśvara. He is the principal subsidiary deity in Śiva temples and till about 13th century A.D. all transactions relating to the temple were made in his name. Hence a separate shrine is provided for him in the temple complex. This shrine is coeval in time with the main temple.

The main temple

The main temple consists of a sanctum tower called *Srī Vimāna* or *Srī kōil*, a big rectangular *maṇḍapa* called the *mahāmaṇḍapa* with an intervening vestibule called *mukhamaṇḍapa*.

The *Srī Vimāna* consists of the following parts beginning with the lowest basement.

1. The basement (*upa-pīṭha*)
2. The base (*adhishṭāṇa*)
3. The wall (*bhitti*)
4. The roof cornice (*prastara*)
5. The garland of miniature shrines (*hāra*)
6. The storeys (*tala* or *bhūmi*)
7. The neck (*grīva*)
8. The crown (*sikhara*) and
9. The finial (*stūpi*).

According to architectural treatises, basements (*upa-pīṭhas*) are introduced in temples to increase the height of the main tower; to add to structural stability and to make the temple tower majestic. That these purposes are magnificently fulfilled by the basements of both the Tañjāvūr temple and Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram temple, may be noticed even by a casual visitor not conversant with architectural principles. Besides the purposes mentioned above, the basement also provides, a space to walk around the tower. In this temple, the basement is ornamented with sculptures of lions and leogriffs with lifted paws.

The main base *adhishṭāṇa* is decorated with well defined courses, consisting of the lotus moulding *adaspadma,* and the *kumuda* moulding, topped by a frieze of leogriffs and riders. This constitute the main base, the top of which forms the flooring level of the inner sanctum.

That portion of the structure rising above the main base upto the roof cornice is called 'the wall' (*bhitti* or *kāl*). It is the principal element that encases the main sanctum and carries on it a number of niches housing various deities. The wall in this temple is divided into two horizontal courses by an intervening cornice. The lower and upper courses have an equal number of niches, on all the three sides except the front.

On the vertical axis the wall surfaces are well defined by intervening recesses forming a rectangle in the centre and squares at the corners. Each is made up of a central niche housing a deity, flanked by a group of small sculptures which in turn are flanked by pilasters simulating pillars. Thus each niche housing a deity appears as a miniature shrine. The recessed walls in the lower courses carry a vase and pilaster ornamentation, while on the upper courses, there are small niches housing deities. Thus there are five principal deities in the lower course and nine deities in the upper course on each side. Since the *mukhamaṇḍapa* abutts the eastern wall, only one niche is retained in the lower course. On either side of the eastern wall, the upper course retains the principal niche at the corners and smaller niches at the recessed walls.

The sculptures in the lower courses, of the *Sri Vimāna* depict various aspects of Śiva and also the subsidiary deities who include Gaṇēsa, Vishṇu, Subrahmaṇya, Durga, Brahma, and Bhairava, supplemented by Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Durga in the niches of the great *maṇḍapa*. The sculptures were made separately and fitted into the niches. They are flanked by a group of small sculptures, carved in situ, illustrating the theme the niche sculpture seeks to represent. The sculptures on the upper courses represent, besides some aspects of Śiva, the guardian deities of the eight quarters.

The roof cornice consists mainly of three parts: (a) the frieze of dwarfs at the bottom, (b) the cornice forming the outer edge of the ceiling roof proper and, (c) the frieze of leogriffs on the top. The cornice is decorated with plain spade-like ornamentation topped by the head of a leogriff.

A row of miniature shrines runs around the tower like a garland, and is called a *hāra*. It consists of square pavilions at the corners, rectangular pavilions in the middle, with a nest (*nida*) ornamentation in between.

Above this rise the main tower, consisting of nine stories including the ground floor. The upper stories of the main tower carry the same type of ornamentation, consisting of square and oblong pavilions except a change; the central wagon-shaped pavilion is flanked by square ones instead of "the nests", the whole being projected forward than the rest. This is a change from the Tañjāvūr tower, which presents a pyramidal appearance without the central projection.

The neck is provided with four niches in the cardinal directions and bulls at the corners. The niches are topped by arch-like embellishment called *kirtimukhas.*

The globular element on the top called Sikhara is according to tradition, made of one stone weighing many tonnes. But, in fact, it is made of many pieces of cut stones dressed for the purpose, as may be seen from the portion where the plaster has fallen down.

The finial, *stūpi* is a metal vase with a lotus-bud design at the top. It is gilded with gold and is said to carry an inscription named after Nallakkā-tōḷa-uḍayār, a Poligar of Uḍayārpāḷaiyam. It is not known whether the *stūpi* is the original one and probably guilded by the Poligar or is a new one gifted by him.

The sanctum enshrining the main deity, is encased by an inner wall. Between the inner wall and the outer, there is an intervening passage-called *sāndhāra* running all around. The two walls are joined at the top by a series of corbelling. They are provided to support the massive super-structure. In the great temple of Tañjāvūr, the outer walls have openings in the centre leading into the intervening passage. Facing the openings are sculptures of deities. The inner faces of the passage are painted with scenes depicting exploits of Śiva and his devotees. But in the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram, no painting is noticed in the inner passage. The central openings and corresponding sculptures, are also not found here. This inner passage around the sanctum is also found on the first floor. In the Tañjāvūr temple the inner wall of this passage carries 108 poses of dancing Śiva, of which 83 are fully finished and the rest are incomplete. But in Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram no such sculptural representation is noticed.

The inner sanctum, houses a very big Śiva Linga, rising to a height of thirteen feet. It is said to be the biggest Śiva Linga enshrined in a sanctum in any South Indian temple. The entrance to the sanctum is guarded by massive doorkeepers, *dvārapālas.*

The *maṇḍapa* immediately preceeding the sanctum is approached by steps leading to it from the north and the south sides and also from the great *maṇḍapa* in the east. The entrances are guarded by big dvārapālas of remarkable beauty. The *maṇḍapa* is supported by massive plain and square pillars. The eastern walls flanking the opening to the

great *maṇḍapa* carry groups of small sculptures illustrating Śaivite themes. The following are the themes thus represented.

The episode of Rāvaṇa travelling in his chariot; shaking the Kailāśa mountain; Śiva seated with Umā, pressing the mountain with his toe; Rāvaṇā's anguish under the weight of the mountain and finally Śiva bestowing boons on Rāvaṇa, are depicted in three panels

The second episode on the same wall depicts Vishṇu, worshipping Śiva with 1008 lotus flowers; finding one short he plucks his own eye and offers it as a flower; Śiva bestows grace on Vishṇu. The panels closer to the entrance depict the marriage of Śiva with Umā. Umā, the daughter Himavān, desirous of marrying Śiva, undertakes austerities and worships Śiva; Śiva, after testing her steadfastness as a beautiful youth, marries her; the celestials witness the marriage; Brahma, the creator offers oblation to the sacrificial fire and Vishṇu gives Umā in marriage to Siva.

The east wall close to the entrance on the northern side depicts the Kirātārjuna scene; Arjuna the Pāṇḍava hero performs austerities to obtain a Pāśupata weapon; Śiva as a hunter accompanied by Umā as a huntress, tests Arjuna's devotion; picks up a quarrel with Arjuna over a kill; Arjuna not knowing the personality behind the hunter, enters into a duel with him and is ultimately vanquished; Śiva manifesting himself bestows the weapon.

At the extreme north of the same side are portrayed two episodes, one representing Śiva quelling the pride of God of death, in order to protect his devotee and the other representing Saint Chaṇḍikēśwara a great devotee of Śiva, cutting off the leg of his father, who disturbed his faith and Śiva bestowing grace on both father and son.

Though these group sculptures are carefully selected, they are imperfectly finished and lack the beauty and elegance of the sculptures of the main tower.

The Mahāmaṇḍapa

Had the original *mahāmaṇḍapa* been preserved, it would have retained the grandeur of its conception and beauty. But as it is, only the portion upto the main base is original. The side walls, the pillars and the ceilings have been reconstructed, probably in the 18th century A. D. Obviously the superstructure should have crumbled due

to neglect and vegetation. However a part of the original has survived upto the ceiling at the western end. From the surviving portion it may be seen, the roof (*prastara*) of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* was in level with the *prastara* of the ground floor (*ādi bhūmi*) of the main *Vimāna*. Like the walls of the main *Vimāna*, a horizontal cornice divides the outer walls of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* into two parts. They carry a series of niches both in the upper and lower courses. The sculptures of Vidyēśvaras, Vasus, Ādityas and other subsidiary deities were probably enshrined in them. As mentioned earlier, the *ādibhūmi* of the main *Vimāna* has two floors inside the *sāndhāra* passage, the intervening cornice forming the intermediate floor level. The *mahāmaṇḍapa* should have been a two storeyed pavilion, quite fitting with the *mahāprāsāda* of the temple. In view of the tall dvārapālas guarding the entrance to the *mukhamaṇḍapa*, the central passage should have had only the upper ceiling without the intermediate flooring. Thus the central passage was flanked by two storeyed structures, resembling the storeyed cloister of the enclosure. It is likely that the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of Tañjāvūr was also originally a two storeyed structure. They would have presented a most spectacular sight when the deities were taken out in procession through the *mahāmaṇḍapa*.

As it stands today the inner side of the *maṇḍapa* has a central passage, leading from the front to the sanctum flanked by two raised platforms and a passage running around. Two massive dvārapālas are noticed at the western end guarding the entrance to the *mukhamaṇḍapa*. A room at the south western corner houses a beautiful Sōmāśkanda image and a few other bronzes. A few sculptures and bronzes receiving regular worship are on the northern platform. The north eastern corner houses an interesting Solar altar, now worshipped as *navagraha* (nine planets).

The front entrance to the great *maṇḍapa*, is again approached by steps from north and south. The entrance to the *maṇḍapa* is guarded by massive dvārapālas. As the flooring of the *maṇḍapa* is on a high elevation, the steps rise to a considerable height forming a high platform in the front. It is said that there is a sub-terranian passage with steps under this platform. Some claim that this passage leads to the royal palace, while others assert that it leads to the river Koḷḷiḍam. Yet a third tradition says that it leads to an underground treasury wherein invaluable properties belonging to the temple are preserved. None in the living memory has set foot on this passage for fear of darkness, poisonous gas and wasps.

It is not unlikely that the empty underground space below the great *maṇḍapa* and the space between the steps, were utilised as store houses.

The original steps leading to the front entrance of the great *maṇḍapa* and the raised platform were probably disturbed and rebuilt as some of the stones built-in haphazardly carry fragmentary inscriptions of the 13th Century A. D.

(B) Sculpture

The sculptures of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷeśwaram are known for their boldness of conception and excellent execution. They present pleasing and charming faces full of life and rhythm. The images of Saraswathi, Chaṇḍēśānugrahamūrthi and Naṭarāja are undoubtedly from the dextrous hands of a master craftsman who has carved a permanent place for his creations in the art history of Tamilnad.

The sculptures on the main *Vimāna*, the great *maṇḍapa*, and the other small shrines represent the forms prevalent at that period and occupy fixed positions to suit the needs of worship, as enunciated in the Āgamic texts. The images in the northern and southern Kailāsa shrines occupy identical positions. The main temple, being a *mahāprāsāda*, introduces additional images in its niches. An image of either Lingōdhbhava or Vishṇu is placed generally in the niche at the back of the *Garbhagṛha* in Śiva temples. In the great *Vimāna* of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram both are found at the back. Vishṇu with his consorts is seen in the lower niche while Lingōdhbhava is shown in the upper niche. In some of the temples of the Chōḷa period, Subrahmaṇya is shown here at the back niche, especially when the temple faces west. An image of Subrahmaṇya is also shown here at the back of the *Garbhagṛha*. The image of Chaṇḍēśānugrahamūrti occupying the north eastern niche is also significant. In Pallava temples like Airāvatēśvara, Muktēśvara and Mātangēśvara, all at Kāñchi, Chaṇḍēśānugrahamūrti figures are noticed occupying an identical position.

The upper row of niches in the main *Vimāna* carry sculptures of dikpālas and eleven Rudras, besides a few well-known forms of Śiva. Of the eight dikpālas the one occupying the northern quarter is clearly Sōma, identified by the halo behind his head. Sōma facing north is found on the third floor of the monolith, Dharmarāja ratha at Māmallapuram. He is also found in the north on the enclosure wall of the Kailāsanātha temple of Kāñchi. Sōma distinguished by a halo behind his head, is always shown as the guardian deity of the north in Tamilnad, unlike in the north

where Kubhera is represented on the *Vimāna*, though both are held identical in architectural treatises.

It may be seen that besides the images identified, there are eleven images with four arms in a standing posture. The dikpālas are secondary deities called *āvaraṇa dēvatas*, receiving daily worship. Besides the dikpālas the eleven Rudras (Ēkādasa Rudras), the twelve Ādityās, the eight Vasus, the eight Vidyēśvaras, the eight mūrthis (ashṭamūrthis) and some other deities are also daily worshipped. According to Āgamic texts the eleven Rudras should be shown standing with four arms, holding *paraśu* and *mṛga* in the upper arms, while the lower ones should be in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. Evidently the eleven images on the *Vimāna* at Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram represent the eleven Rudras. The names of the eleven Rudras as given in texts are Sadyōjāta, Vāmadēva, Aghōra, Tatpurusha, Īsāna, Mṛtyunjaya, Vijaya, Kiranāksha, Aghōrāstra, Srīkaṇṭa and Mahādēva.

The great *maṇḍapas* at Tañjāvūr and Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram carry a number of niches adorned with sculptures. In the Kailāsanātha temple of Kāñchi images of Lakshmi, Saraswathi, Durga and Jyēshṭa are found in the *maṇḍapa*. According to Mayamatha, the well-known South-Indian text on architecture, these four forms of Goddesses are to be placed outside the *Brahmasthāna*, the place occupied by the main *Vimāna*. In Tañjāvūr and Gangaikoṇḍachōḷpuram Lakshmi, Saraswathi and Durga are found in identical niches on the walls of the great pavilion. Evidently they are enshrined in these niches to fulfil ritual needs. Some of the sculptures in standing posture found on the *mahāmaṇḍapa* have not so far been identified. It is likely they also represent the secondary deities. A series of sculptures at Tañjāvūr are shown with two arms, holding a sword and a shield. They are probably the eight Vasus, described in Āgamic texts. Unfortunately the great *maṇḍapa* at the Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram has fallen down and undergone repairs. The majority of the niches are disturbed and are no more in existence. Some of the loose sculptures preserved in the enclosure may belong to this group.

The representation of the guardian deities on the *Vimāna*, the sculpture placement in the niches of the *Vimāna* and the presence of Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Durga in the niches of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* show that the builders had architectural treatises before them.

The following is the sculpture placement in the lower niches of the main *Vimāna.*

EAST-WALL (SOUTH SIDE)

KANKĀLADHARA :- Six armed standing figure in *tribhanga* pose. The upper right arm holds a snake; the middle one feeds the *mṛga* and the lower one playing on *uḍukkai* is broken. The upper left arm holds a trident across the back with a chowri hanging; the middle one is placed on the head of a dwarf standing by the side and the bottom holding the *uḍukkai* is broken. Pair of sandals adorn the feet. The plaster and painting on the figure belong to a later period.

On the wall to the right of Śiva are shown Sūrya on top; Bhūtagaṇas in the middle and wives of sages at the bottom. The wall to the left of Śiva carries Chandra on top, gaṇas in the middle and wives of sages at the bottom.

The *makara torana* above this niche carries a bas-relief of Umāmahēśvara in the middle.

SOUTH-WALL

GAṆĒSA :- Gaṇēsa, dancing with four arms; upper right arm holds a *parasu;* the lower right holds the broken tusk; the upper left arm is lifted up; the lower left arm holds a fruit. The right leg is lifted up in rhythmic stance. Sūrya and Chandra, gaṇas and bhūtas are shown on the sidewalls. Below the feet are shown three ganas, playing maddaḷa, cymbals and conch. The Centre of the *torana* carries a faint carving. It represents a seated tiger, two fish and a bow which was the royal insignia of Rajēndrachōḷa.

ARDHANĀRI :- A standing figure in Tribhanga pose with three arrns; two to the right and one to the left; The upper right holds a *parasu,* while the lower right rests on the head of a bull standing besides it. The only left carries a full blown flower, probably *nīlōtpala.* A parrot seated on the arm is seen pecking the pollen. The right side of the head is adorned with a *jaṭamakuṭa* and the left with a *kesabandha.* A lion pendant in the right ear and a roll pendant in the left are seen. A parasol above and one fly whisk on either side are shown. The breast is shown pronouncedly on the left emphasizing the feminine aspect. The left leg wears a sari extending upto the knee. The right leg wears *bringipāda.*

No sculpture is represented on the side walls. The middle of the *makara toraṇa* carries wavy lines. This figure of Ardhanāri is particularly charming with a captivating smile on its face. The artist has been able to bring forth masculine firmness and feminine tenderness in the same face.

DAKSHIṆĀMŪRTI :- The original figure of Dakshiṇāmūrti that should have adorned this niche seems to have been lost. The present one is a late figure that could be assigned 13th Century A. D. It is disproportionate to the niche and is dwarfish. It is similiar to the sculptures of the period seated on a mountain with four arms. The upper right arm holds a rosary of beads. The lower right is in a teaching posture; the upper left holds fire and the lower, a book. The right leg is planted on the back of a lying dwarf; the left is bent and placed on the right knee. One of the image of sage, wearing *kuṇḍala* ear ornaments seems to be original. The side walls have four rows of miniature sculptures. East-wall :- two sages and two gaṇas; five women in second row; six ganas in third row and four sages in the fourth row. West wall :- first row, Agastya, two dēvas and Sūrya; second row, dēvas; third row devas and sages; and two devotees in the fourth row.

HARAHARI :- Four armed figure standing erect in *samabhanga* pose. The right of the figure represents Hara and the left Hari. This figure is generally called Harihara, but the Saivite Āgamas designate this figure as Harahari. The upper right arm of the figure holds the axe and the lower right in boon bestowing (*abhaya*) pose; the upper left arm holds a conch and the lower arm is on the thigh. The *dukūla,* the lower garment on the left is shown upto the knee while the one on the right represents the skin shown above the knee. No sculptures are shown on the side walls. A lotus is shown above the niche.

ĀḌAVALLĀR (Naṭarāja) : A delightful figure of four armed dancing Śiva, holding kettle drum in the upper right arm and boon bestowing palm on the lower right. The upper left carries fire and the lower left is thrown across the body in *gajahasta.* The matted locks are flying in rhythm on either side. On the right is shown Gaṅgā. By the left side of the leg is shown an eight armed dancing Kāḷi, carrying drum, sword, trident, *abhaya*, *daṇḍahasta* etc. A three legged figure, probably representing Kūḷi is seen on the right. Below the feet is shown the woman-saint Kāraikkāl Ammai, who on account of her devotion, was endowed this privileged position of being seated below the seat of the Lord, singing

his Greatness. Three Gaṇas are also shown playing symbols and *maddaḷa.* On the west side wall is shown Sūrya on top. Subrahmaṇya seated on peacock is shown flying towards the Lord while Gaṇapati moves equally briskly on his rat. Further down is four armed Nandikēśvara playing *maddaḷa.* Chandra is shown on the top on the side wall to the east. Two armed Goddess Pārvati is leaning on a majestically looking bull; she holds a lotus in her right arm.

WEST WALL

GAṄGĀDHARA: Four armed standing figure of Śiva, embracing Pārvati standing by his side. The upper right arm of Śiva receives the falling Ganga in his matted lock; the lower right moves gently around Pārvati. The upper left holds mṛga; the left is placed on the thigh. The right arm of the Dēvi is placed on the thigh while the left is bent. Three rows of miniature sculptures are noticed on the side walls. Sūrya is shown on top of the wall right of Śiva; Dēvas are in the middle and two devotees at the bottom. The left wall carries Chandra at the top, devotees in the middle and Bhagīratha doing penance at the bottom. It is significant that the back wall (west wall) at the Kailāsanātha temple of Kāñchi carries a Gaṇgādhara in a separate cell-shrine.

LINGŌDHBHAVA :- Four armed standing figure of Lingodhbhava emanating from the shaft of fire. The right upper arm holds axe and the lower is in the *abhaya* pose; the left upper holds antelope and the lower is placed on the thigh. The leg below the ankle is hidden. A garland of flowers is shown around the Linga portion at the top. Vishṇu as a boar is shown at the bottom in an outline. Brahma as swan is not represented.

MAHĀVISHṆU : Four armed standing figure of Vishṇu holding discus and the *abhaya* pose in the right arms and conch and hand-on-thigh pose with the left. On his right is shown two armed Srī wearing a breast-band and on the left is Bhūdēvi. The side walls show Sūrya and Chandra at the top, dēvas in the middle, and sages at the bottom.

SUBRAHMAṆYA : A delightful figure of four armed standing Subrahmaṇya, carrying *Sakti* and *Vajra* in the upper arms while holding the lower right in *abhaya,* and the left on thigh. A prominent garland of flowers characteristic of Subrahmaṇya figures is shown at the root of the crown. The Dēva wears *channavīra.*

VISHṆU ANUGRAHAMŪRTI : The God and Goddess seated on a pedestal. Śiva four armed, carrying *Parasu* and *mṛga* in the upper arms; the lower left is placed on the thigh while the right is in the pose of holding something, probably Chakra. The figure may be taken to represent Chakradānamūrti or Vishṇu anugrhamūrti. The Dēvi seated to the left of the Lord holds a lilly in her right arm. A parasol and a pair of chouries are shown above. Due to weathering, the stone has pealed off from the figure.

The side wall to the left of the Lord carries an image of Chandra on top; two devotees in the middle and at the bottom is shown Vishṇu worshipping Śiva. The right wall carries Sūrya at the top and devotees in the middle. The bottom figures have weathered.

NORTH-WALL

KĀLĀNDHAKA :- Four armed Śiva, destroying Kāla, right leg placed on Kāla, and with the left pressing him. The upper right arm holding *parasu* (axe) is about to strike; the lower right holds the trident at ease; the upper left holds a *mṛga* and the lower left points to Kāla. Kāla a fairly big figure, is shown struggling under the feet of the lord.

Side walls carry Sūrya and Chandra at the top. On one side there are devotees and on another is shown Mārkaṇḍēya, the boy-saint worshipping Linga and the God of death dragging him forcibly with a rope.

DURGA : Eight armed standing figure holding discus, arrow, sword and *abhaya* with the right arms and conch, bow, shield and hand-on-thigh pose with the left. Below her legs is shown a buffalo head, imperfectly carved. Behind her stands a lion.

BRAHMA : Four armed standing, three headed (the fourth head at the back not being visible) and bearded figure of Brahma in erect pose. Holds *sruk* and *sṛuva* in the upper right arm and a rosary of beads in the lower right. Holds a bunch of *dharbha* grass in the upper left and a *kuṇḍika* in the lower left. He is flanked by two armed Dēvis. The Goddess to the right of Brahma, holds a bundle of palm leaves in her left arm. Evidently she is Sarasvati. The Goddess to the left is obviously Sāvitrī, as Brahma is called Sāvitrīpati. The side walls carry Sūrya and Chandra and Dēvas and sages.

BHAIRAVA : Eight armed standing nude figure, wearing a garland of skulls. A big snake coils around the thighs; round ball-like eyes, protrud-

ing teeth, flame like hairs; holding a trident, *paraśu*, sword and noose in the right arm; and with left, fire, *kapāla*, *khatvāṇga* and bell. Behind the figure is shown an imperfectly carved hound.

KĀMĀNTAKA :- Four armed seated figure; right upper arm holding a rosary of beads and the lower arm pointing down. The left upper arm holds a chowri and the lower is placed on thigh. The head dress is delightfully treated and has a distinctiveness of its own.

The side wall to the right carries a figure doing penance on top; below are two devotees. On the left side at the top is shown Manmatha aiming an arrow at Śiva. Two devotees are shown in the middle and at the bottom are shown Manmatha and Rathi.

EAST-WALL (NORTH SIDE)

CHAṆḌĒSĀNUGRAHAMŪRTI : Śiva seated on a throne with four arms carries axe and antelope in his upper arms; with the lower the Lord is seen crowning Chaṇḍēsa with a garland of flowers, a symbol of affection and stewardship. Chaṇḍēsa is seen seated in front and with folded arms receiving the pride of place bestowed on him by his Lord. Chaṇḍēsa is the embodiment of devotion and piety and the place he attained is considered the highest, a devotee of Śiva is privileged with. It is called the *Chaṇḍīsa padam*, the abode of deliverance. According to Śaiva Siddhānta Śiva bestows this grace, in the company of Śakti, His consort. In the sculpture under reference, Pārvati or Umā Paramēśwari as she is often described, is seated by the side of Her Lord. The treatment of ornaments, the portrayal of limbs and affection with which Śiva is seen taking the garland around the head of Chaṇḍēsa are suggestive and truely convey the supreme message of Śaiva Siddhānta, the image seeks to depict. In the figure of Chaṇḍēśa, Rājēndra Chōḷa has carved his own image. Sri Ç. Sivaramamurti in his work 'the Chōḷa temples' states that "The most remarkable carving here, the Chaṇḍēsānugrahamūrti panel, is almost a suggestion of the laurels won by Rājēndra through the grace of Śiva and he humbly presents himself as a devotee of Lord, who blessed Chaṇḍēśa".

On the side walls is shown the story of Chaṇḍēśa; Chaṇḍēśa worshipping Śiva as a Liṅga; the cows standing by the side; his father watching the happenings hiding himself behind the branches of a tree; disturbing Chaṇḍēśa's worship; purturbed Chaṇḍēśa throwing his axe at his father and Śiva bestowing grace on both.

SARASWATI : Facing the image of Chaṇḍēsānugrahamūrti, on the west wall of the Mahāmaṇḍapa is another delightful figure of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge. The Dēvi is seen seated on a lotus throne with four arms; holds a rosary of beads and an *amṛta kalasa* with the upper arms and palm leaves and teaching pose with the lower ones; behind her is shown a *prabha*, aureole.

LAKSHMI : Correspondingly on the South side of the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, in the west wall is an image of Goddess Lakshmi, seated on a lotus throne with two arms. The Dēvi holds lotus flowers in her arms; unlike Sarasvati, she is seen wearing a breast-band. Above her are shown two elephants pouring water from golden pots held in their trunks.

Sculptures in the niches of the upper course of the main *Vimāna*.

EAST-WALL (SOUTH SIDE)

1. Sūrya standing.
2. Bearded Agni (guardian of the south-east).

SOUTH WALL

3. Kālāntaka Śiva.
4. A four armed deity in standing pose.
5. „
6. Yama (guardian of the south).
7. Dakshiṇāmūrthi.
8. Four armed deity (standing).
9. -do- „
10. -do- „
11. Nṛṛti (guardian of the south-west)

WEST WALL

12. Bhikshāṭana.
13. Three headed figure
14. Four armed deity probably Varuṇa (Guardian of the west).
15. Vishṇu.
16. Lingōdbhava.
17. Brahma.
18. Two armed deity probably Vāyu (Guardian of the North West).

19. Four armed deity.
20. Four armed deity.

NORTH WALL

21. Gauriprasāda.
22. Four armed deity.
23. Four armed deity.
24. Sōma (guardian of the north; distinquished by a halo behind)
25. Brahma.
26. Four armed deity.
27. Four armed deity, Īsāna (guardian of the north-east)
28. Bhū-varāha Vishṇu.
29. Subrahmaṇya.

EAST-WALL (NORTH SIDE)

30. Gajasaṁhāra.
31. Chandra

DVĀRAPĀLAS (GATE KEEPERS)

There are altogether six pairs of massive, monolithic dvārapālas guarding the various entrances to the main temple, of which four pairs are found in the east. The first pair guard the entrance tower at the east. They are now fallen down and lie upside down. The second pair is to be seen at the eastern entrance to the *mahāmaṇḍapa*. The entrance from the *mahāmaṇḍapa* to the *mukhamaṇḍapa* is guarded by a third pair while the fourth guard the entrance to the sanctum. The side entrances to the *mukhamaṇḍapa* from the south and the north are also guarded by dvārapālas of exquisite workmanship. These dvārapālas are a class by themselves. The Āgamic texts mention four pairs of dvārapālas, each to guard a cardinal direction. Their names are given as under. East :- Nandi and Mahākāla; South :- Hērambha and Bhṛingi; West :- Durmukha and Pāṇḍura and North :- Sita and Asita. The *Vimāna* of the Tañjāvūr temple has four pairs of dvārapālas each guarding a direction. Evidently they represent the images named above. In the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram the *Vimāna* does not carry dvārapālas except in the east. The dvārapālas guarding the entrances to the *garbhagṛha* are certainly Nandi and Mahākāla. In all likelihood the dvārapālas guarding the south and

north entrances to the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* are Hērambha and Bhṛingi, Durmukha and Pāṇḍura respectively.

THE SOLAR ALTAR

The solar altar called Saura pīṭha in Āgamic texts is in the form of a full blown lotus on a square pedestal in two tiers. The upper tier carries eight deities portrayed at eight directions. They are considered the eight planets, which, including the central lotus representing Sūrya (sun) constitute the *navagrahas*, (nine planets) worshipped by the Hindus for the bestowal of good fortune and the removal of obstacles. The lower tier is modelled as a charriot with wheels on either side, drawn by seven horses. Aruṇa the Charioteer of Sūrya is shown driving the horses. The seven horses are said to represent the seven days of the week. The wheels are ornamented with twelve petals, representing the twelve months of a year. At the corners are seen flying celestials, *gandharvas* carrying flower garlands.

The Āgamic texts specify the worship of Sūrya in the form of a lotus altar. Evidently this is a representation of Saura pīṭha, solar altar, intended for daily worship. This elegant piece is also decidedly a Chāḷukyan sculpture, probably brought here as a war trophy. In recent years, it has assumed great significance as a large number of devotees worship it as Navagraha for the fulfilment of their vows. When the planet Saturn changes its position once in 27 months, nearly a million people offer worship to this altar.

OTHER SCULPTURES : Besides the sculptures found on the walls of the shrines, a few loose sculptures are also found in the temple. A few of them have been collected and embedded on a platform by the side of the northern entrance. The following sculptures are found embedded :- Bhikshāṭṇa, Lingōdbhava, Ganēsa, Subrahmaṇya, Dēvi, Vīrabhadra, Brahma, Durga, Chaṇḍrasēkhara, Vṛshabhāntika, Vīnādhara, Sūrya, Sage, Dvārapāla, three figures of Nāgarāja, two images of Vīnādhara and four figures probably representing secondary deities. On the south enclosure wall, near the southern Kailāsa, are found embedded a four armed standing Ardhanāri, a Gajalakshmi and two images of Sūrya. By the side of the Lion-well, is found an image of Vishṇu with Srīdēvi standing. By the side of the Sōlar pīṭha, in the *mahāmaṇḍapa* there are, an image of eight armed Durga and a Sūrya. These two images are in Chāḷukyan style and probably were brought as trophies. Sri C. Sivaramamurti in 'the Chōḷa temple' states that the Nandi in the temple of Goddess is Chāḷukyan in style.

(C) Bronzes

There are a few bronzes of remarkable beauty preserved in the temple. They were probably gifted for worship when the temple was erected. Of the classical bronzes in the collection, Sōmāskanda, Subrahmaṇya, Durga, Bhōgasakti, Adhikāranandi and probably Vṛshabhāntika are to be assigned to the period of Rājēndra I.

BHOGASAKTI : A two armed standing image of Pārvati of arresting beauty is now placed near the *sanctum.*

DURGA : Four armed standing figure in erect (*samabhanga*) pose; holds discus and conch in the upper arms and boon-bestowing and hand-on-thigh poses in the lower arms. The Goddess is shown wearing a breast-band; buffalo head is not represented below the feet. Appropriate with its role the figure displays firmness with which the Goddess struck the demon.. The conch and discus are supported by metal pieces issuing from the back.

ADHIKĀRANANDI : Four armed figure in *abhaya* pose, standing on a lotus pedestal. The upper pair of arms hold axe and antelope; the lower arms in *anjāli* pose hold a garland of flower in between. This image is particularly a good specimen representing the theme.

SŌMĀSKANDA : Quite fitting with the great Linga in the sanctum and the mahāprāsāda of the temple, the group of Sōmāskanda in the temple is fairly big in size and exhibits all the classical qualities of the Chōḷa age. The group consists of Śiva seated majestically on a pedestal with four arms. A two armed Dēvi is shown by the side. The original Skanda image is missing. The figures of Śiva and Dēvi closely resemble the sculptures on the lower niches of the main vimāna. The group could be assigned to the period of Rājēndra I and was probably the principal Sōmāskanda image of the temple. It may be mentioned that the bronze image of Sōmāskanda is the main processional deity, representing the Linga in the sanctum. The Sōmāskanda image of Thiruvārūr is called Vidi Viṭaṇkar and the one at Tañjāvūr was called Dakshiṇamēru Viṭaṇkar. The Vimāṇa of Tañjāvūr temple was called Dakshiṇamēru by its builder Rājarāja I. The group of Sōmāskanda in the Gangaikoṇḍa-chōḷapuram temple should have been the main processional deity of the temple. This is the biggest group of Sōmāskanda image of the imperial Chōḷa period now known to exist.

SUBRAHMAṆYA : By far the best bronze in the collection of the temple is the Subrahmaṇya image variously called Kārthikēya, Dēvasēnāpathi and Muruga. The image about $3\frac{1}{2}'$ in height is shown with four arms standing on a lotus seat. Unlike the conventional lotus pedestals seen in most of the bronze images, the present one is realistically treated. The protrution at the bottom was probably to slide the image into a bigger pedestal which is now missing. The right upper arm holds sakti, the top of which is broken; the lower right holds a sword of which only the handle now remains, the blade is lost; the left upper arm holds a cock and the lower left holds a shield. The figure is elegantly proportioned and delightfully adorned with ornaments. The vigourous poise and the charming smilimg face are suggestive of youth and beauty. Subrahmaṇya as Muruga is adored as the embodiment of youth, beauty and knowledge. Muruga is the darling of the Tamil country. His exploits are celebrated in Tamil literature; Subrahmaṇya is a War God, Dēvasēnāpathi the greatest commander-in-chief of the celestials. Rājēndra I was the greatest commander, the Tamil country ever saw. It is of interest to note that this great hero has chosen Subrahmaṇya as his favourite deity. The sword, sakti, and the shield in the hands of the image symbolise Subrahmaṇya's martial quality while the cock stands for the final victory.

VṚSHAVĀHANA : Four armed image of Śiva standing cross legged. The lower right arm is bent and placed on the head of a bull which is missing. The tall head dress, a *Jaṭāmakuṭa* is somewhat disproportionate.

VI

Minor Shrines

DURGA SHRINES : Images of Durga are enshrined in four cardinal directions of the palace. Tradition says that these images guarded the four gates of the fortified city. These are now at Paḷḷiōḍai in the north, at Meykāvalputhur in the east, and on Vīrareddi street in the south. The fourth in the west was originally near the bund of the great lake but has recently been brought nearer to the palace and enshrined.

DURGA ON VĪRAREDDI STREET : The Durga on Vīrareddi street is a remarkable piece. Durga is shown with eight arms, standing; right arms hold arrow from the *quiver,* chakra and a sword; the lower right is with a trident piercing the demon shown at her feet. The left arms hold *sankha,* bow, shield and the dying demon, Mahisha. Durga's left leg is planted on the chest of the demon while her right leg steadies her on the ground. Her mount is shown to the right at the bottom. The demon holding a shield and a sword is on his knees slowly sinking. A halo is shown behind the deity. A careful study of the sculpture, the arms, the weapons, the dying demon and the style and the treatment of the figure suggest that this sculpture is Chāḷukyan in origin and was brought as war trophy.

KANAKKUPILLAIYĀR : A few furlongs to the south west of the big temple is a small shrine, enshrining a seated Gaṇesa of considerable beauty. It is four armed, holding the little axe, rosary of beads, a broken tusk, and a *mātulinga* fruit. Around the waist is seen a serpent belt. This image also seems to be Chāḷukyan in origin.

KURUVĀLAPPAR TEMPLE : The Vishṇu temple about a mile to the west of the great temple is now called Kuruvālappar temple, believed to be a contraction of the term Kurugai Kāvalappar. The temple is intimately associated with the lives of two Vaishnavite saints, Nāthamuni and his grand-son Āḷavandār. Nāthamuni spent his last days here. Āḷavandār on hearing that Nāthamuni was on his death bed, hurried to this place; but before he could reach, the great Acharya passed away. Sri Āḷavandār erected a temple in the place where the Acharya attained salvation.

According to tradition the present temple was the one built by Āḷavandār. The main deity called Vīranārāyaṇap Perumāḷ is in standing pose. The temple is preceded by a small entrance tower.

AIYANĀR TEMPLE : To the south east of the palace remains, is a small shrine of Aiyanār. The temple faces south and houses a beautiful image of Aiyanār and his consorts Pūrṇa and Pushkala. The sculpture of Aiyanār is an elegant image and closely resembles the sculptures on the main temple and decidedly a sculpture of Rājēndra's period.

VII

Epigraphs

Twelve inscriptions and a few fragments have been noticed so far on the temple. An inscription of Vīrarājēndra Chōḷa, the third son of Rājēndra-I is the earliest and lengthiest running to about 216 lines. It relates to gifts of lands in a number of villages in the Chōḷa empire, the proceeds from which were to be utilised for worship and maintenance of the temple. The accuracy with which the boundaries and measurements of the lands are recorded, the taxes from which the lands were exempted, the crops that were raised in the lands, the total quantity of grains to be measured out to the temple by each village, the names of the officers who drafted the endowment, the names of those who compared the drafting, the names of those who entered them in registers etc., recorded in detail in this epigraph, show the efficiency and thoroughness of Chōḷa administration.

These gifts were ordered by Vīrarājēndra while he was in the royal palace at Kāñchīpuram in his fifth regnal year. Though this is a single record, it relates to more than six orders of the king. The epigraph records that the order would take effect from the regnal years of Rājēndra-I and Rājādhirāja-I. The earliest regnal year of Rājēndra from which an order was to take effect, is mentioned as the 23rd. Evidently the temple was completed and consecrated before that (1035 A. D.). It is likely that Rājēndra, the builder of the temple, himself made these gifts. Probably they had not been recorded and Vīrarājēndra ordered them to be entered in the proper registers. There are two orders, that took effect from the 26th and 30th years respectively of Rājādhirāja I, the son and successor of Rājēndra. Evidently, some gifts were made in the reign of Rājādhirāja as well. From the records it is seen that more than one hundred and ten thousand bags of paddy were to be measured out to the temple every year by the villages mentioned in epigraphs.

A careful study of the inscription reveals that most of the lands and proceeds recorded in this inscriptions are also recorded in the Tañjāvūr inscriptions of Rājarāja as gifts to the great temple of Tañjāvūr.

It is strange that most of the lands gifted to Tañjāvūr temple by Rājarāja should have been transferred to the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram by his son within twenty five years of the original gift.

The inscription is of great value. It mentions the names of the various divisions and sub-divisions of the Chōḷa empire. It also gives a long list of officers who were in charge of the administration in the reign of Vīrarājēndra. A certain Pallavaraiyan is mentioned as the *Thirumandira Ōlai* (royal secretary) of Vīrarājēndra. He received orders verbally from the king and drafted them. The orders were scrutinised and approved by three senior secretaries (*Thirumandira Ōlaināyakam*) whose names are recorded as Vānādhirājan, Madhurāntaka Bṛahmādhirājan and Pallavarayan. Sixty four other officers are also named; their names are given at the end of this chapter.

The inscription is of interest from another angle. In listing the villages gifted it gives the names of various temples, tanks, colonies, irrigation channels; cremation grounds etc., in each village, thus furnishing details for a study of the contemporary history of these villages. These details are published at the end of this chapter.

The name of the temple according to this inscription is Gangaikoṇḍa Chōḷisvaram. Rājēndra is referred to as the father, the victor of Pūrvadēsa, Gangai and Kaḍāram (*Pūrvadesamum Gangaiyum, Kaḍāramum Koṇḍaruḷina Ayyar*). Rājādhirāja is referred to as the elder brother, the victor of Kalyāṇapura and Kollāpura who laid down his life while seated on an elephant (*கல்யாணபுரமும் கொல்லாபுரமும் கொண்டு ஆனை மேல் துஞ்சின அண்ணல்*). The inscription also details the victories gained by Vīrarājēndra.

Another inscription of interest is a fragment found on the front steps of the great maṇḍapa. It mentions Vānavanmahādēvi and Ammangādēvi. Vānavanmahādēvi was the name of Rājēndra's mother (Rāja rāja's wife). One of Rājēndra's queens was also named Vānavanmahādēvi. It is not known who is referred to in this inscription; but in all likelyhood it refers to Rājēndra's queen. Ammangādēvi, the other, was one of the daughters of Rājēndra-I. She was given in marriage to the Eastern Chāḷukya ruler Rājarāja Narēndra. Their son was the celebrated Kulottunga-I.

The next king represented in the inscription is Kulōttunga I (1070-1120). A record of his dated in 49th regnal year does not pertain to this

temple but relates to the gift of a village Sungam thavirtha Chōḷanallur, as a dēvatāna gift, for provisions etc., to the temple of Rājēndra Chōḷīsvara in Pottālimaḍa. Probably this temple was built in the reign of Rājēndra I and was named after him. The inscription states that worship in the temple was stopped as sufficient provisions were not available. Kulōttunga made the gift tax free and arranged for regular worship. A certain ascetic Āryadēvan is mentioned in this inscription. The epigraph also records that the order of the king was issued when he was seated on a throne, at the eastern porch in the ground floor of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷa māḷigai in Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram.

The last Chōḷa king represented in inscriptions is Kulōttunga III. His inscriptions are in fragments and found by the side of the steps to the eastern entrance to the great maṇḍapa. They record the victories gained by Kulōttunga and the erection of a victory pillar. From the fragmentary nature of these inscriptions it may be surmised that a number of other Chōḷa inscriptions of the temple have been lost. Reference has been made to the presence of an incomplete inscription of a Gāhadawāla king, probably of Madanapāla.

The earliest Pāṇḍya king to be represented here is Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, identical with the ruler who uprooted the Chōḷa empire. He ascended the throne in 1251. The sole inscription of his found in this temple is dated in his second regnal year. Evidently the gift was made when the Pāṇḍya emperor captured Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram and paid a visit to the temple. He established a special worship called Sundara Pāṇḍyan sandhi, after his name to be performed daily. For this purpose Sundara gifted lands etc, in Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. The inscription mentions a number of places, in Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram like the gateway lane, Suddhamali lane, Rājēndra Chōḷa fort wall and Vēmbuguḍi gate.

Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram is said to lie in Ponparappipaṟṟu of Maṇṇaikoṇḍa Chōḷa vaḷanāḍu, a subdivision in Vaḍakarai Vikrama Chōḷa vaḷanāḍu.

The next Pāṇḍya to be rspresented is Vikrama who ably assisted his brother Sundara. His record is dated in his sixth year (1157). Vikrama like his brother established a special worship in the temple after his own name as Rājākkalnāyakan sandhi for which he gifted twenty *velis* of land. The epigraph names two villages Kulōttungachōḷanallūr, and Rājēndrahcōḷanallūr. It also mentions the boundaries of lands

gifted. The river Madhurāntaka Vaḍavāru and irrigation channels called Ānaiveṭṭuvān kāl and Adigai Nāyakan vāykāl. A highway called the Rājēndra Chōḷan highway is also referred to in this inscription.

Two inscriptions of Pāṇḍya Māravarman Kulasekhara who ascended the throne in 1268 A. D. are found engraved on the temple. The first one dated in his fourth year, records the purchase of lands in Devaniputtūr belonging to a certain Kumārmangalam Udayān, Sivatāṇḍan. The other inscription which is incomplete, is dated in Kulasekhara's fifth regnal year. It records the sale of lands belonging to a number of individuals to the temples of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷīsvarm. The epigraph mentions highways named the Kulōttunga Chōḷan fort wall highway; the Viḷāngu-ḍaiyān highway and a highway through which a short elephant passed.

Two inscriptions of a chieftain, Thiruvēngaḍamudaiyān Ekāmra-nātha Gāngeyan of Vaippur, who was in control of this area are recorded in this temple. One of the inscriptions gives the Saka date 1385 (1463 A.D.). From the inscription it may be seen that this chieftain probably erected a maṇḍapa named after himself, Ekāmranāthan Maṇḍapa. While the chieftain was seated in a *maṭha* of Ekāmranātha Maṇḍapa the Mudalis, the temple priests, the *tānattārs* (those who looked after the properties of the temple), the Parikarathār (temple attendants) and a certain Kasmīrarāya (probably a person from Kashmir) assembled before him. The chieftain bestowed the right (probably on Kasmīrarāja) of duties-over *Thirumāḷigaikūṛu* (maintenance of the enclosure and the right to enjoy proceeds apportioned for the purpose) for fifteen days in a month and lordship over the *maṭha* for the other fifteen days of the month. For this purpose he gifted two house sites in the northern row and two in the southern row of Rājēndra Chōḷa street. A certain Kūhūruḍaiyān is mentioned as the temple accountant. The other inscription of the chieftain relates to a similar gift. Mention has been made of the inscriptions of Vijayanagara rulers in the temple.

Note A

The quantity of paddy measured or gold paid per annum as due to the temple by various villages mentioned in Vīrarājēndra's inscription are given below. As the inscription is damaged at some places, either the name of the village or the quantity measured is lost in certain cases. The total quantity of paddy measured amounted to 1,03,893 *kalams* (bags) per annum. As there are many gaps in the inscriptions, the total measurement should have been many thousand *kalams* more of paddy. The maximum measure received from a single village is 20,585 *kalams*. Unfortunately the name of the village is lost. Vayalur is the next village to measure 16,900 *kalams*. Evidently these villages should have been the most fertile villages during the Chō̤la period.

VILLAGE	PADDY PER ANNUM
Maruttuvakkuḍi	2967 kalams, 1 tūṇi, 1 pathakku and 2 nā̤li.
Karuppūr	49 kalams, 1 kuṛuṇi, 4 nā̤li.
....	2955 kalams, ...
Pālā̤ṟṟuthuraiyūr	4980 kalams, ...
Īngaiyūr	4219 kalams, 7 kuruṇi.
Panamangalam	4070 kalams, 1 kuruṇi, 7 tūṇi.
Kāṛimangalam	1083 kalams, 5 nā̤li.
Sāttanpāḍi	....
Parakesari Nallūr	....
Venbaikuḍi	4784 kalams, 2 tūṇi, 6 nā̤li.
Māhāṇikuḍi	2315 kalams, 1 kuṛuṇi, 1 nā̤li.
Kī̤lpādiri	1200 kalams, ...
Sirusemburai	632 kalams ......
Madurāntakamangalam	....
Kāñchivāi Kuṛungulam	4500 kalams, ...
.... galam	....
....	2300 kalams, ...
Tiraimūr	....
....	7500 kalams.

Ka!anivāyil	500 kalams, ...
Kōḍanguḍi	4000 kalams, ...
....	5000 kalams, ...
Jayaṅkoṇḍachō!anallūr	9000 kalams, ...
Kondal	2500 kalams, ...
Ōlayān Maṅgalam	....
....	2040 kalams.
....	940 kalams, ...
Karuppūr	....
....	20585 kalams.
Vayalūr	16900 kalams, 1 Pathakku, 7 nā!i.
Pavithra Māṇickkanallūr	800 kalams.
Ulakaḷandachō!anallūr	347 kalams.
Kēraḷānthakanallūr	983 kalams.
Maṇṇaikoṇḍachō!anallūr	519 kalams.
Manukulakēśarinallūr	1231 kalams.
Irummaḍichō!anallūr	....
....	Gold 340 Ka!añju and 8 Mañjāḍi.

Kalam, Tūṅi, Pathakku and Nā!i are grain measures.

Note B

The temples of various villages mentioned in Vīrarājēndra's inscription.

VILLAGES	TEMPLES
Irumaḍi Chōḷanallūr :	Sri koil.
Karuppūr :	Thiruvagattīśvaramuḍaiya mādēvar Srī kōil.
	Aiyan Srī kōil.
	Kāḍukāḷ Srī kōil.
Kēraḷāntakanallūr :	Śrī kōil.
Koṇḍal :	Piḍāri Srī kōil.
Mākāṇikuḍi :	Kālāpiḍāri Srī kōil.
Maṇṇaikoṇḍa Chōḷanallūr :	Śrī kōil.
Manukula Kēśarinallūr :	Śrī kōil.
Ōlaiyānmaṅgalam :	Thiruvaranīsvarattu Dēvar Srī kōil.
	Piḍāri Srī kōil.
	Kēṭṭai Srī kōil.
Panamaṅgalam :	Mahādēvar Srī kōil.
	Piḍāri Srī kōil.
	Aiyan Srī kōil.
Parru..........	Dēvar Srī kōil.
Pavitra Māṇikka Nallūr :	Srī kōil.
Sirusempuṛai :	Mādēvar Srī kōil.
Turaiyūr :	Piḍāri Punnaicchēri Naṅgai Srī kōil.
	Piḍāri Poduvagaiyuḍaiyāḷ Śrī kōil.
	Kāḍukāḷ Srī kōil.

	Aiyan Srī kōil.
	Kudhirai vaṭṭamuḍaiyāḷ Srī kōil.
	Ḍurgaiyār Srī kōil.
	Kālāpiḍāri Srī kōil.
Ulagaḷanda Chōḷa Nallūr :	Srī kōil.
Vayalūr :	Thirukaṟṟaḷi Mādēvar Srī kōil.
	.... Varathu Mādēvar Srī kōil.
	Aiyan Srī kōil.
	Piḍāri Iḷampuḷinaṅgai Srī kōil.
	Paḷḷi Srī kōil.
Veṇbaikuḍi :	Srī kōil.

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Note C

Divisions, sub-divisions and villages mentioned in Virarājēndra's inscription.

Adhirājarāja Vaḷanāḍu	....	Āttippuliyūr
Arumoḷidēva Vaḷanāḍu	Cheṛṛūr Kūṛṛam	Kaṇḍiyūr
	,,	Nallambar
	Maṅgala Nāḍu	Surānkuḍai
Jayaṅgoṇḍachōḷa	....	Arasūr
Vaḷanāḍu	Thiruvaḷundūr Nāḍu	Kaḷanivāyil
	,,	Kūttanūr
	,,	.........kuḍi
	,,	Madhurāntakanallūr
	,,	Te ....ūr
	Viḷaināḍu	Koṛṛamaṅgalam
	,,	Virarājēndra Charuppēdimaṅgalam
Kēraḷāntaka Vaḷanāḍu	Uṛaiyūr Kūṛṛam	Karuppūr
	,,	Vayalūr
Kshatriyasikhāmaṇi	....	Cheṛṛūr
Vaḷanāḍu	............Kūṛṛam	Maḷavachchēri
	Panaiyūr Nāḍu	Sirukuḍai
	,,	elvēli
	Thirunaraiyūr Nāḍu	Parakēśarinallūr
	Vēlā Nāḍu	Peṛumpannūr
Madhurāntaka Vaḷanāḍu	....	Iṛumaḍi Chōḷanallūr
		Kēraḷāntakanallūr
		Maṇṇaikoṇḍa Chōḷa nallūr
		Manukulakēsarinallūr

	,,	Pavitra Māṇikkanallūr
	,,	Pallava Kulāntaka nallūr
	,,	Talaich Cembil Nāḍu
	,,	Ulagalanta Chōḷa nallūr
	,,	Vikrama Chōḷanallūr
	,,	Vikrama Chōḷapuram
Muḍikoṇḍa Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu	Thiruvaḷudināḍu	Pulinkuḍi
Rājēndra Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu	Chōḷa Pāṇḍiya Vaḷanāḍu	Tirukkōṭṭiyūr
Nittavinōda Vaḷanāḍu	Ārūr Kūṟṟam	Vilattūr
	Kiḻān Kūṟṟam	. . . .
	Kiḻān Kūṟṟam	Vai . . . .
Pāṇḍya Kulāsani Vaḷanāḍu	Ārkkāṭṭuk Kūṟṟam	Kaṇḍiyūr
	Puṟakkiḷiyūr Nāḍu	Pūlānkuḍai
	. . . .	Siṟṟāyil
Rājādhirāja Vaḷanāḍu	Kuṟukkai Nāḍu	Koṇḍal
	. . . .	Taṇiyūr Sri Vīra-nārāyana Charuppēdi-maṅgalathu naḷūr.
	Veṇṇaiyūr Nāḍu	Ōlaiyāṇ Maṅgalam.
Rājarāja Pāndi Nāḍu	Miḻalai Kūṟṟam	Kiḻk Kūṟṟup ponpaṟṟil
Rājarāja Vaḷanāḍu	Kiḻvēṅgai Nāḍu	Perunallūr
Rājēndrachōḷa valanāḍu	Thirumunaipāḍi Nāḍu	. . . .
	Paṭṭānpākka Nāḍu	Vikkiran Vākkam
Uyyakkoṇḍār Vaḷanāḍu	Ambar Nāḍu	Jayaṅgoṇḍa Chōḷa-nallūr
	Ambar Nāḍu	Paḷaiyūr
	Pāmbūr Nāḍu	. . . .
	. . . .	Viḷathal mangalam

....Valanāḍu	Innambar Nāḍu	Maruthuvakkuḍi
	Tiruvāli Nāḍu	Parakēsaripuram
	....	.......vaṇkuḍi
Vijayarājēndra Valanāḍu	Ārvalakkūṟṟam	Madukkūr
	Puliyūr Nāḍu	....
	Pulaiyūr Vāḷkkai	..Singaḷāntakanallūr
Vīrarājēndra Valanāḍu	....	Īngaiyūr
	....	Kaḷanivāiyl
	....	Kārimangalam
	....	Kōḍankuḍi
	......kūṟṟam	Parakēsarinallūr
	....	Māgāṇikuḍi
	....	...ñchivāi Kuruṅkuḷam
	Pāchchil Kūṟṟam	Kīḷppālārrutturiaiyūr
	....	Ponamangalam
	Peruvaḷanallūr Kaṇdam	Kīlpādiri
	....	Peruvaḷanallūr
	....	Sāṭṭanpāḍi
	....	Tiraimūr
	Thirucchemburai Kaṇḍam	Śiṟu Śemburai
	....	Ūṟṟuthuṟai
	....	Veṇbaikkuḍi

Jayangoṇdachōla maṇdalam

Ānmūr Kōṭṭam	Kumiḷi Nāḍu	Parattaṇḍalam
Puliyūr Kōṭṭam	Māngāṭṭu Nāḍu	......mangalam

Note D

The following are the administrative officers referred to in the inscription of Vīrarājēndra. The posts held by them appear within brackets.

1. Pallavarayan alias Kongan Gangaikoṇḍachōḷan.
2. Villavarājan alias Vīrabhadran Thillaiviḍangan. (*Oppiṭṭu puhunda keḷvi*)
3. Rājēndra Vairāgarachōḷan alias Āndaiyār Vēḷān ofVeṇkāḍu in Pāmbūr Nāḍu a subdivision of Uyyakoṇḍār Vaḷanāḍu.
4. Arayan Rājarājan.
5. Vīrarājēndra Brahmādhirājan alias Chandrasēkhara Bhūshaṇa Bhaṭṭan of Vīranārāyaṇa Charuppēdimangalam a thaniyūr in Rājādhırāja Vaḷanāḍu.
6. Rājarāja Kumaṇarājan alias Kōnārkōn Aḷagiya Pāndiyan of Vaḍatalaisembil Nāḍu, a subdivision of Madurāntaka Vaḷanāḍu in Rājarāja Pānḍināḍu.
7. Rājarāja Mūvēndavēḷān alias Āditthan Sōlai of Perunallūr in Kiḷvēngai Nāḍu, a subdivision of Rājarāja Vaḷanāḍu.
8. Gunanidhi Arumoḷi (Chōḷa) Mūvēndavēḷān alias Parakēsarinallūr Udaiyān of Tirunaraiyūr Nāḍu, a subdivision of Kshatriya Sikhāmani Vaḷanāḍu.
9. Vikramasinga Mūvēnda Vēlān alias Kōnuḷār Kūtthan of Tirumunapipāḍi Nāḍu in Rājēndrachōḷa Vaḷanāḍu, a subdivision of Nitha Vinōdha Vaḷanāḍu.
10. Vikramachōḷa Mūvēndavēḷān alias Koṛṛan Sāthan of Pattān Pākkanāttu Vikranpākkam in Tirumunaippāḍi Nāḍu, a subdivision of Rājēndra Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu.
11. Vīrarājēndra Tamiḷadaraiyar of Perumparrur in .....vaḷanāḍu, a subdivision of Kshātriya Sikhāmani Vaḷanāḍu.
12. Rājarājēndra Mūvēndavēḷan alias Pūran Āditthanār of Pūlānkuḍai in Puṛakkiḷiyūr Nāḍu, a subdivision of Pānḍikulāśani vaḷanāḍu.
13. Tirunīlakaṇṭa bhattar of Ēmapeṛūr in Vīrarājēndra Charuppedimangalam of Puliyūr Nāḍu a subdivision of Vijayarājēndra Vaḷanāḍu. (*Naduvirukkai*)

14. Kotti Adirāthra Rājiyār of Virarājēndra Charuppedimangalam in Vilainādu a subdivision of Jayangonda Chōlavalanādu,
15. Kādavarājar of Namban Pagaiyadakkiyār. (*Vidaiyil Adhikāri*)
16. Vīrarājēndra Munaiyadaraiyar alias Kilavar Kāman Chandran Vengādanār of Parathandalam in Kumili Nādu in Ānmūr Kōttam, a subdivision of Jayankondachōlamandalam.
17. Rattapādikonda Chōlamūvēndavēlān alias Āmāttur Kunriyār of Palaiyāru in Ambar Nādu a subdivision of Uyyakondār Valanādu.
18. Jananātha Mūvēndavēlār alias Atthāniyār of Konda ......, in Kurukkainādu, a subdivision of Rājādhirāja Valanādu.
19. Mūvēndavēlān of ......, a subdivision of Rājēndrachōla Valanādu.
20. Āditthachūlāmani alias Bhattālakan Thirunilakantan of ......lūr a subdivision of Vikramachōlavalanādu.
21. Kadārankondachōla Mūvēndavēlān alias Mādēvan Kārāyil of ..... nraika in ...... a subdivision of Arumolidēva Valanādu.
22. Madurānthaka Mūvēndavēlān of Nitthavinōda ...... a subdivision of Vijayarājēndravalanādu.
23. Rāja Mūvēndavēlān alias Kumaran Ādavallān ..... ngudai in Kurakkai Nādu, a subdivision of Rājādhirāja Valanādu.
24. Kālalōkanāthan ...... of Jayankondachōlanallūr in Ambar Nādu a subdivision of Uyyakkondār Valanādu.
25. Gangaikondachōla Pallavaraiyar alias Ēran Selvan of ...... Chirrāyil a subdivision of Pāndikulāsani Valanādu.
26. Virachōla Mūvēndavēlān of Arasūr, a subdivision of Jayankondachōla Valanādu.
27. Rājarāja Vijayapālar alias Araiyan Vināsaka of ...... Puduvūr...
28. Vikrama Nārāyana Mūvēndavēlān alias ...... ya Pādatthan of Nidūr.
29. Vaikunthan of Surānkudai in Mangala Nādu a subdivision of Arumolidēva Valanādu.
30. Vilupparaiyan alais Chōlan of Malavacchēri in Kshatriya Sikhāmani Valanādu.
31. Nrpadivākara Mūvēndavēlān alias Mangalankilār in Vilatthāl Mangalam, a subdivision of Uyyakondār Valanādu.
32. Muvēndavēlān alias ...... vengādan of Nallambar in Sirrūrkūrram a subdivision of Arumolidēva Valanādu.

33. Vīrarājēndra Kachchiyūr Nāḍāḷvān alias of ...... Tirunaraiyūr Nāḍu.
34. Pārthivēndra Brahmamārāyar alias Mādēvan Sātthan of ...... a subdivision of Adhirājarāja Vaḷanāḍu.
35. Vīrarājēndra Mūvēndavēḷān ....
36. Kūtthan Sūṛṛi alias Manukulachōḷamūvēndavēḷār of Pallava Kulāntakanallūr in Madurāntaka Vaḷanāḍu, a subdivision of Rājarāja Pāndināḍu.
37. Rājamāṇicka Mūvēndavēḷān alias Tiruvēngaḍatthān, of ...... Mangalam in Māngaḍu Nāḍu, in Puliyūr Kōṭṭam a subdivision of Jayaṅkoṇḍachōḷamaṇḍalam.
38. ...... Pāndiya Mūvēndavēḷān of Kaṇḍiyūr, in Seṛṛūr Kuṛṛam, a subdivision of Arumoḷidēva Vaḷanāḍu.
39. Vīrarājēndra Malayappichōḷar alias Vīrānavai Māṇikkar of ...... in Kiḷār Kūṛṛam, a subdivision of Nittha Vinōda Vaḷanāḍu.
40. ....
41. Rājavidyādhara Mūvēndavēḷān alias Kōn Ambala Kūtthan of Ponpaṛṛi of Kiḷkūṛu in Miḷalai kūṛṛam, a subdivision of Rājarāja Pāṇḍināḍu.
42. Chōḷakula ...... Mūvēndavēḷān of Puḷinkuḍai in Thiruvaḷudhi Vaḷanāḍu in Muḍikoṇḍa Chōḷavaḷanāḍu, a sub-division of Rājarāja Pāṅdi Nāḍu.
43. Udāraviḍanga Mūvēndavēḷān alias ...... of sirukuḍai ...... in Panaiyūr Nāḍu a sub-division of Kshatriya Sikhāmaṇi Vaḷanāḍu.
44. Mummaḍichōḷa Viḷupparaiyar alias Nakkan of Nelvel in Panaiyūr Nāḍu a subdivision of Kshatriyasikhāmaṇi Vaḷanāḍu.
45. Nālur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭar of Sri Vīranārāyana caruppēdimangalam a taniyūr of Rājādhirāja Vaḷanāḍu. (*Naḍuvirukkai*)
46. Sri Mādhava Bhaṭṭa Somayāji of Karippuram, in Thirukkōṭṭiyūr of Chōḷa Pāṇḍiya Vaḷanāḍu in Rājēndra Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu, a subdivision of Rājarāja Pāṇḍi Nāḍu.
47. ...... Bhaṭṭar of Vangipuram in Vīrarājēndra charuppēdimangalam, a subdivision of Jayaṅkoṇḍa Chōḷa Valanāḍu.
48. Śivadēva Bhaṭṭar of Kandiyūr in Ārkāḍu Kūṛṛam, a subdivision of Pāṇḍikulāsani Vaḷanāḍu.
49. Iruṅkaṇḍi Veṇkāda Bhaṭṭar of Vīrarājēndra charuppedimangalam

Viḷainādu, a subdivision of Jayankoṇḍa Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu.

50. Viripuram Narasimha Bhaṭṭan of the above village.

51. Aṭṭāmpuram Bhattar of the above village.

52. Dānavinōda Mūvēndavēḷān alias Naminägan Arangan of Vilathūr in Ārūr Kūṟṟam, a subdivision of Nithavinōda Vaḷanāḍu. (*Puravuvari thiṇaikkaḷathu kaṇkāṇi*)

53. Parākramachōḷa Mūvēndavēḷān alias Kūtha Raman of...... Niyamam in Puliyūr Kōṭṭam in Māngāḍunāḍu a subdivision of Jayankoṇḍa Chōḷa Maṇḍalam. (*Puravuvari thiṇaikkaḷam*)

54. ...... vēndavēḷān of Chōḷanāḍu a subdivision of ...... Koṇḍa Chōḷavaḷanāḍu.

55. Villavan Mūvēndavēḷān alias Angi Aiyāran of Madukkūr in Ārvala Kūṟṟam. a subdivision of Vijaya Rājēndra Vaḷanāḍu. (*varippotthagam*)

56. Mādēvan Brahmamārāyan of Koṟṟamangalam in Viḷainādu a subdivision of Jayankoṇḍa Chōḷa Vaḷanāḍu.

57. ....(*variyiliḍu*)

58. Vēḷāṇ Rāmadūtan of Singalāntakanallūr of Puliyūr Vaṭkai a subdivision of Rājēndra Vaḷanāḍu.

59. Mādēvan Veṇkāḍan of Ātthippuliyūr in Adhirājarāja Vaḷanāḍu. (*Varippotthaka kaṇakku*)

60. ......of Cheṟṟūr in Kshatriyasikhāmaṇi Vaḷanāḍu. (*Paṭṭōlai*)

61. ......in Mangalanāḍu a subdivision of Arumoḷidēva Vaḷanāḍu.

62. Viḷupparaiyan alias Sēnan Arivāḷan of Aḷagiyachōḷa Māṟai Nāḍu in Thingaḷūr Kūṟṟam, a subdivision of Rājēndrachōḷa Vaḷanāḍu.

63. Karuṇākaran Thiruve ...... of Kalkudai in ......pēr a subdivision of Adhirājarāja Vaḷanāḍu. (*Paṭṭōlai Eḷuthina Pūtchippāṭṭan*)

64. Kalyāṇapuramkoṇḍa .... (*Puravuvari thiṇaikkaḷam*)

VIII

Literature

A number of literary works in both Tamil and Sanskrit, refer to Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram and its temple.

THIRUVISAIPPĀ : The sacred hymns (*Thiruvisaippā*) composed on the presiding deity of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷiśvaram by Karuvūrdēvar, is the earliest work to refer to this great temple. Karuvūrdēvar, a Brahmin by birth, hailed from Karuvūr the modern Karūr in Trichy District. He was a great devotee of Śiva and is believed to be a Siddha. He has composed devotional hymns on ten temples among which are included the Rājarājēśvara temple of Tañjāvūr and the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. Karuvūrdēvar was a contemporary of Rājarāja I and his son Rājēndra I, the builder of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷiśvaram. Thiru-Isaippā is a particular type of poetic composition in Tamil. The ten hymns of Karuvūrdēvar and similar hymns of a few other Saivite saints have been included in the ninth book (*Thirumuṛai*) of the Saiva canon. Karuvūr dēvar's address to the deity of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷiśvaram, is soul-stirring poetry that ought to be read in its original. 'People in large numbers from far and near throng to the temple of Gangaikoṇḍachōḷisvara adoring the deity with folded arms' says Karuvūrdēvar. Śiva as Gangādhara also comes in for special praise.

VIKRAMĀNKADĒVACHARITA : The historical work, Vikramānkadēvacharita in Sanskrit on Chālukya Vikramāditya, by Bilhana throws valuable light on the relationship between the Chālukyas of Kalyān and the Chōḷas and incidentally refers to Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. Bilhana, the poet, was born of a Brahmin family and hailed from Kashmir. He was born and brought up in Khonamushagrāma in jayavana-highland of Kashmir. His father was Jyeshṭakalasa and mother Nāgādēvi. Bilhana attained distinction in Vedic learning, Sanskrit poetry (Kāvya) and Patanjali's *mahābhāshya* (grammar). He left Kashmir in pursuit of fortunes and went to Mathura, Brindhāvana, and Kāsi. From there he went to Dhāra the capital of Bhōja, but before he could reach Dhāra, Bhōja the great patron of Sanskrit learning passed away. Disappointed Bilhana went to Gūrjaradēsa, where he could meet only envious poets. Bilhana left

Gūrjara and went on a pilgrimage to Rāmēśvara in the south and on his way back was fortunate enough to visit the Chāḷukya capital. Vikramāditya the Chālukya contemporary of Vīrarājēndra Chōḷa and Kulōṭṭuṅga immediately appointed Bilhana as his court poet (*Vidyāpathi*). *Vikramānkadēva Charita,* describes the exploits of Vikramāditya in eighteen chapters. It is needless to go into the details of the work. According to the work, Vīrarājēndra Chōḷa, the third son of Rājēndra I, gave his daughter in marriage to Vikramāditya after effecting a truce with him. Possibly the marriage took place on the banks of Tungabhadra. Vīrarājēndra returned to his capital and soon after passed away. This plunged the Chōḷa country into chaos. Having decided to place Vīrarājēndra's son, Adhirājēndra on the Chōḷa throne, Vikrama swiftly marched to Kānchi and spent some days there subduing some opponents. From there he turned his eyes on Gangākuṇḍa (Gangaikoṇḍacholapuram) which abounded in wealth and learned men. The city was beautiful with lofty towers and resembled the veritable abode of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. It truly resembled Amarāvati the capital of the celestials. Vikramāditya crowned Adhirājēndra, the Chōḷa prince after defeating the enemies. He spent about a month there and returned to the banks of Tungabhadra, after subduing the forest archers (probably the *Vēṭṭuvars*). But within a few days, the Chōḷa prince was killed by his opposing subjects (*Prakritivirōdhahata*) and the seat was occupied by Rājiga, the Vēṅgi ruler (Rājēndra Kulōttuṅga). The above account of Bilhana gives the state of affairs at Gangāikoṇḍa-Chōḷapuram and the visit of Vikramāditya to that city. Scholars differ on the death of Adhirājēndra. Sadasiva Pandarathar, who has written an excellent account of Chōḷa history in Tamil, points out an inscription of Adhirājēndra wherein he is stated to be seriously ill. Pandarathar believes that Adhirājēndra died due to illness and was not killed by his subjects. Probably Adhirājēndra's weakness and the opposition he met from his generals, proved fatal to his life. Vikramāditya, wanted to punish the evil doers. But Kulōttuṅga who by that time was firmly in Chōḷa throne, fomented trouble, by instigating Vikrama's brother Sōmēśvara to attack him from behind. Though Vikrama was successful in defeating his brother and is credited with a success against Kāñchi, he never set foot on Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram again. Kulōttuṅga was strong enough to foil his attempts and was ably assisted by the experienced Chōḷa Generals. Bilhana's Vikramānkadēvacharita is said to have been composed in 1085 A.D.

KALIṄGATTUPPARAṆI : The Kaliṅgattupparaṇi a most fascinating historical work in Tamil literature, was composed by Jayankoṇḍār, to celebrate the conquest of Kalinga by Kulōttuṅga I. Jayankoṇḍār adorned the court of Kulōttuṅga I as his court poet and composed the work, Kaliṅgattupparaṇi towards the end of Kulōttuṅga's reign. The work celebrates the exploits of Kulōttuṅga from his childhood and the greatness of his general Karuṇākara Toṇḍaimān, who headed the victorious Chō̤la army on its Kaliṅga expedition. From Kaliṅgattupparaṇi, it may be seen that Kulōttuṅga was born and brought up at Gangaikoṇḍachō̤lapuram. He was also made a crown prince at that city. The city is referred to as Gaṅgāpuri.

கங்காபுரியின் மதில் புறத்துக் கருதார் சிரம்போய் மிகவிழ

No detailed description of the city is however met with in the poem. Jayankoṇḍār, the poet hailed from Dīpanguḍi and was recognised as an eminent poet (*Kavichaṇḍitan*) by his contemporaries.

MŪVAR ULĀ : Oṭṭakkūttar another eminent Tamil poet, adorned the courts of three successive Chō̤la emperors, Vikramachō̤la, Kulōttuṅga II and Rājarājā II. He has composed three quasi-historical works, (*Ulās*), one on each of the above rulers. These works, *Vikramachō̤lan Ulā Kulōttuṅgachō̤lan Ulā* and *Rājarājan Ulā*, are popularly called Mūvar Ulā, and are known for their high literary accomplishments. Each poem gives a brief summary of the Chō̤la history beginning with the mythical ancestors and details the exploits of the hero. Gangaikoṇḍa Chō̤lapuram is referred to by name in *Kulōttuṅgachō̤lan Uḷā*. The poet says that all the fourteen worlds were struck by the beauty and wealth of the capital.

பொங்கார் கலிசூழ் புவனம் பதினலும்
கங்காபுரி புகுந்து கண்டுவப்ப. — கு. சோ. உலா. 59.

The *Rājarājachō̤lan Ulā* describes the palace, entrance towers, palacial buildings, streets, pavilions, (*maṇḍapas*), temples, *chūḷigas*, tōraṇas, beautiful windows, *pials* (*teṟṟis*), mādas, dance halls etc., that adorned the capital.

கோயிலுரிமைக் குழாம் நெருங்கி--வாயிலும்
மாளிகையும் சாலையும் ஆலயமும் மண்டபமும்
சூளிகையும் எம்மருங்குந் தோரணமும்--சாளரமுந்
தெற்றியும் மாடமும், ஆடரங்கும் செய்குன்றும்
சுற்றிய பாங்கரும் தோன்றுமே . . . . . — இரா. சோ. உலா. 79-81.

References are not wanting in later literature which however are not of great interest to the present study.

IX

Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷan Lake

The great lake, lying about two miles to the west of the temple and now called Ponnēri (golden lake) is of historic interest. It is intimately connected with the history of the capital. Its existence prior to the advent of Rājēndra-I is not known. According to Thiruvālaṅgāḍu plates the lake was the liquid pillar of victory that Rājēndra established to celebrate his conquest of Gangetic plains. If so, this is the biggest man made lake known to exist in this country. It is about sixteen miles in length and about three miles in breadth. At its extreme ends it has inlet and outlet channels that have gone out of use now. The lake itself has now been divided into two parts by a road running across, connecting Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram with Jayaṅkoṇḍachōḷapuram in the west. The lake supplied water to the moat running around the old fortification.

Rājēndra I, cherished the conquest of Gaṅgai as the greatest event in his life and rightly assumed the title Gangaikōṇḍachōḷa. His capital was also named Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. According to Thiruvālaṅgāḍu plates, the generals who headed the Chōḷa army on its Gangetic expedition brought the holy water of Ganges in golden vessels carried on the heads of vanquished rulers. Rājēndra himself went upto the banks of the Gōdāvari river to receive his generals. The holy water was poured into the lake (a small part of it was also poured into the lion-well inside the temple) and the lake itself was named Chōḷaganga, a liquid pillar of victory.

विजितैः तदीयतटभूमि नायकैः सलिलं तदीयमथ पावनं परम् ।
निजनायकाय मधुरान्तकाय तत् समनीनयत् सपदि दण्डनायकः ॥

चोलगंगमिति ख्यात्या प्रथितन्निजमण्डले ।
गंगाजलमयन्देवः जयस्तम्भं व्यधत्त सः ॥

Thiruvālaṅgāḍu copper plates.

Chalukya and Kalinga sculptures in Gangaikondacholapuram

Chalukyan sculptures :

Mention has been made earlier that a few sculptures of Chālukya origin are found in the village of Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram. The most outstanding piece is that of *Sūryapīṭha,* now worshipped as *Navagrha* in the big temple. Images of Sūrya and Durga, also found by the side of *Sūryapīṭha* in the same temple, are from the Chālukyan area Another image of Durga enshrined in the shrine of Durga to the north of the temple, (west of the *Simha tīrtha*) is also executed in the Chālukya style, but whether it actually comes from the Chālukya area is not known. An image of Gaṇēsa, now called Kaṇakkupiḷḷaiyār in a temple about three furlongs to the south-west of the great temple, is also Chālukyan in origin. Another Durga, enshrined in a temple in Veerareddi Street, is a fine specimen of Chālukyan art.

The presence of so many Chālukya sculptures at Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram need not surprise us, for the Chōḷas were in perpetual war with the Chālukya's of Kalyān. Rājādhirāja I, the son and successor of Rājēndra I, conquered Kalyān and brought as a war trophy an image of Dvārapāla from Kalyānapura. The image, now preserved in the Tañjāvūr Art Gallery, bears an inscription on its pedestal, mentioning that it was a war trophy brought by Uḍaiyār Vijayarājēndra from Kalyānapura. Obviously the Chālukya sculptures found in Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram were brought as war trophies by the successors of Rājēndra I.

Kalinga sculptures in Gangaikondacholapuram :

Three beautiful images of Kaliṅga origin have been recently discovered at Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram by the Tamilnadu State Department of Archæology. The sculptures are found lying in a mound called Kīḷaichengameḍu, about one mile east of the great temple. The nearby village is Meykāvalputtūr, the ancient body-guards' village. Mention has been made that a Durga image which is said to have guarded the eastern gate of the Palace, is at Meykāvalputtūr.

In fact, it is an image of Kāli, over seven feet in height. The entire image is covered with ant-hills. Another image of Kāli, decidedly of the period of Rājēndra, found here, represents the eight-armed Devi shown seated on a pedestal, holding various weapons. A dying man is shown on the seat. Near this Kāli image are seen the Kalinga sculptures, two representing Śiva as Bhairava and the third representing Bhairavi. All the three sculptures are carved in red sandstone as found at Bhuvanēswar and Konarak and are excellent specimens of Kalinga art. The representation and treatment are decidedly Kalinga.

Bhairava :

Śiva as Bhairava is shown standing nude, with four arms, holding *sūla* and *kadga* in the right arms and *damaru* and *kapāla* in the left arms. A *mundamālā* is seen running upto his knees. The *kinkini mēkhala,* a band of small bells, adorns the waist. The Lord wears the *jaṭāmakuṭa* with a garland of skulls around the head. To the left of Śiva, is shown an emaciated, nude male figure with protruding eyes. To the right is shown a two armed emaciated female figure, holding a head in the left arm. The emblem on the right is obliterated.

Bhairava :

Another beautiful image of Śiva as Bhairava, with four arms; the upper part of the body only upto the waist is available. The upper right arm is broken; the lower right carries a *kadga.* The left arm holds *damaru* and *kapāla.* The *kinkini mekhala* is noticed. The *kapālamāla* is also found.

Bhairavi :

Devi as Bhairavi standing with eight arms, holds *sūla,* sword, a small dagger and probably a chouri in the right arms. The left arms hold *katvānga, damaru, kapāla* and *munda* (head). The Devi is also shown nude, and wearing a long *munḍamālā* extending below the knee. To the right of Devi is shown a standing nude figure of a male, with two arms. To the left is shown a dog.

Probably these Bhairava and Bhairavi images represent Yōgēsvara and Yōgini deities. Rājēndra as a result of his Gangetic expedition,

erected a temple of Yōgesvara and Yōgini at Kōlār and arranged for offering *madhyamapāna*. Rājēndra's generals, who returned after their historic march to the Ganges through Kaliṅga, should have brought these valuable sculptures as war trophies and erected a temple in the capital. The sculptures may be assigned to 9th Century A.D.

Bhairavi :

Another image of Bhairavi, executed in granite, on the model of Kaliṅga image is of crude workmanship and is by a local artisan. Its presence shows the impact of Yōgini cult on the local population.

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8. Nilakanta Sastri, K. A., *The Chōḷās,* University of Madras, (1955).
9. Ottakkuthan, *Mūvarulā,* published by U. V. Swaminatha Ayyar, Library, Adaiyar, (1957).
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16. Thathachari, K. T., *Gangaikoṇḍachōḷapuram,* Madras.

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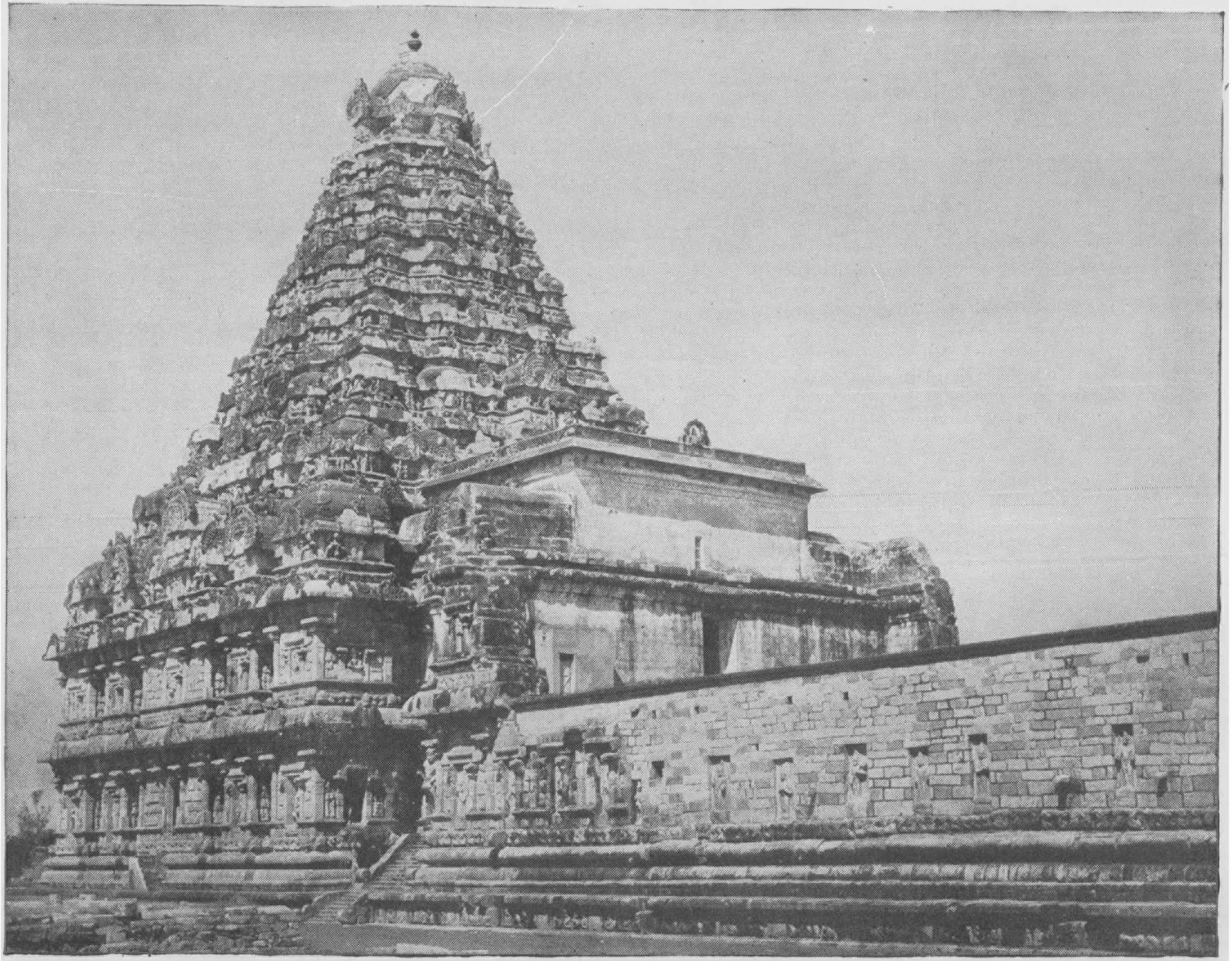
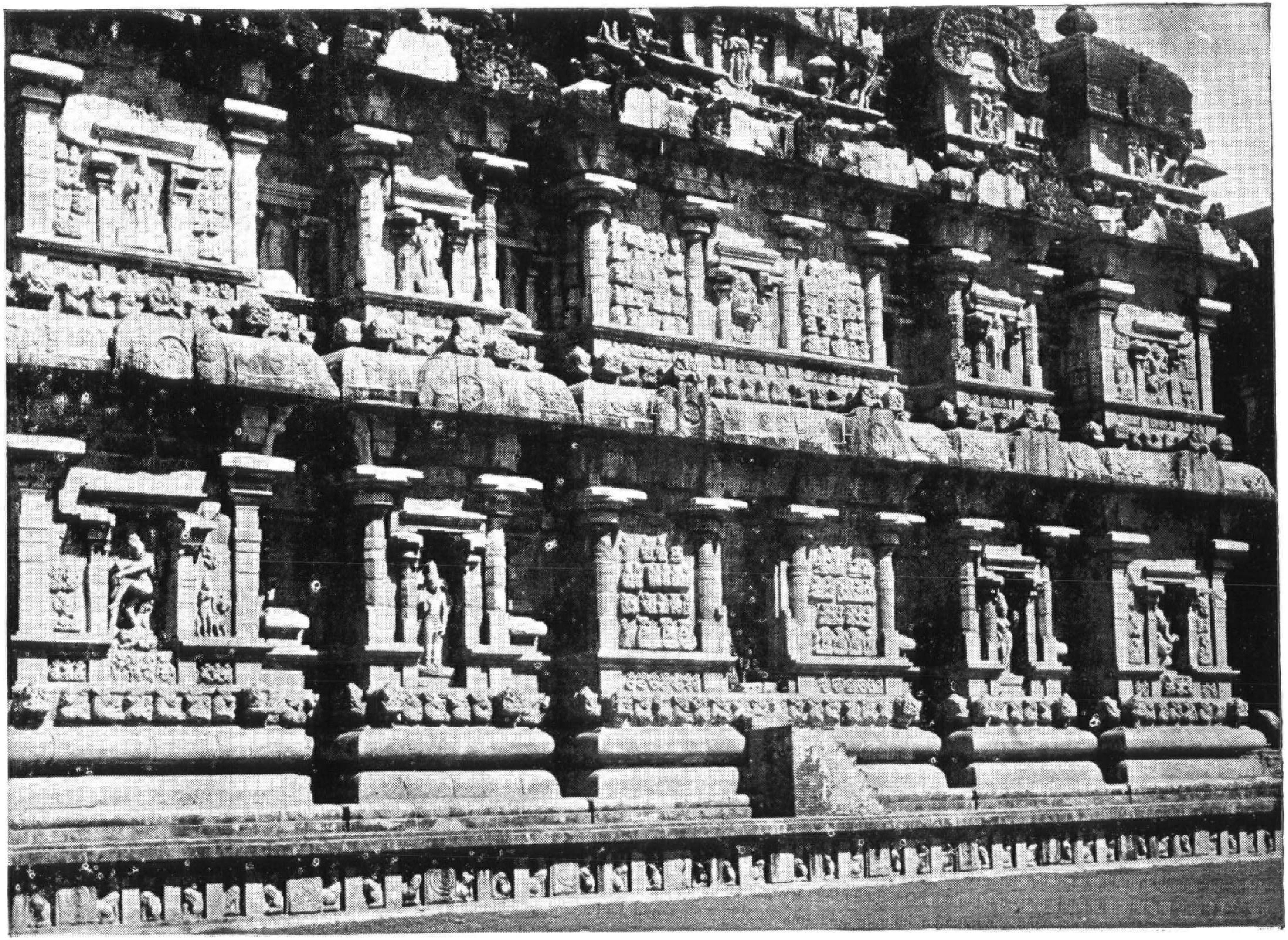
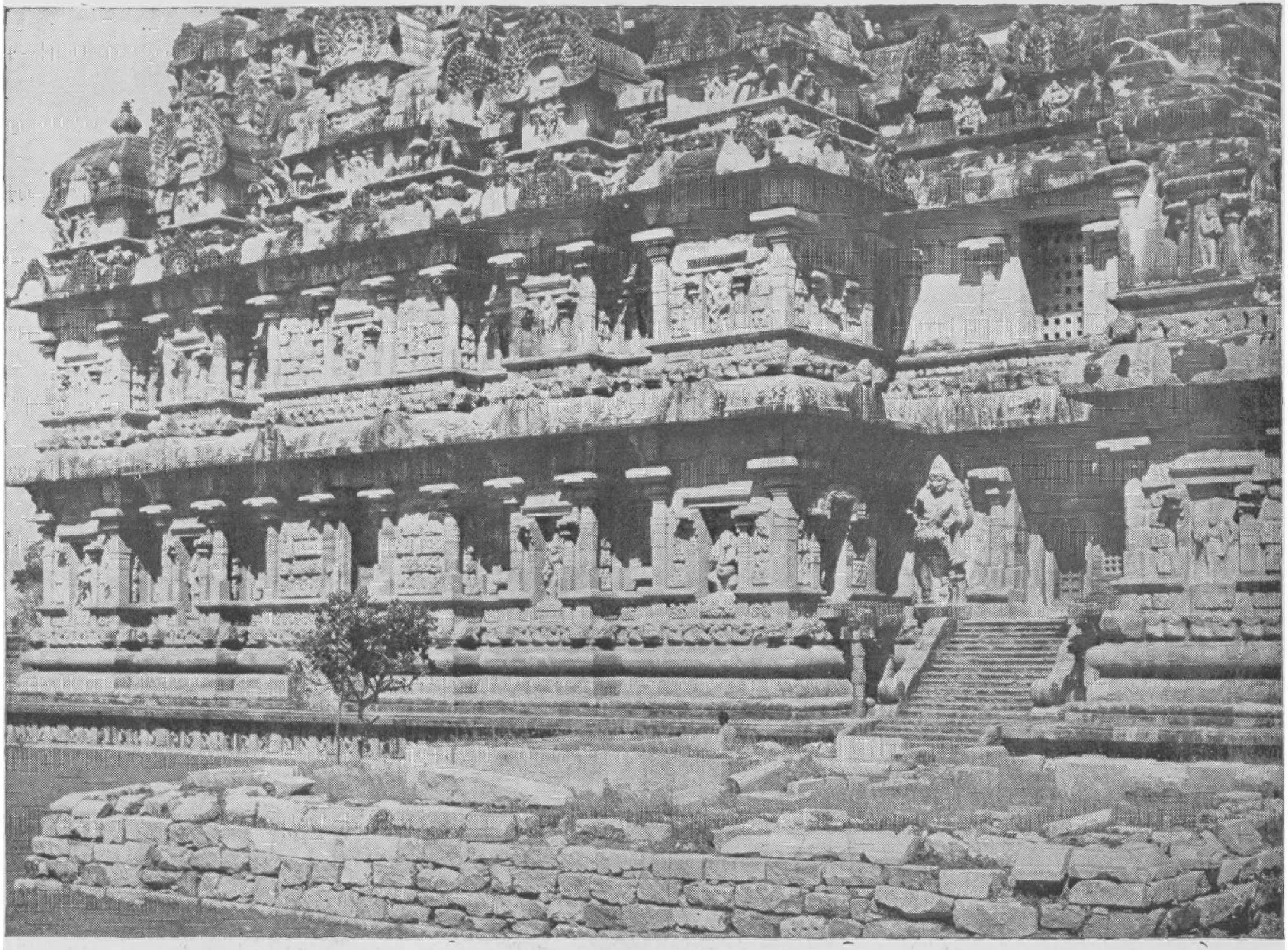
2. The main Vimāna. View from north-east



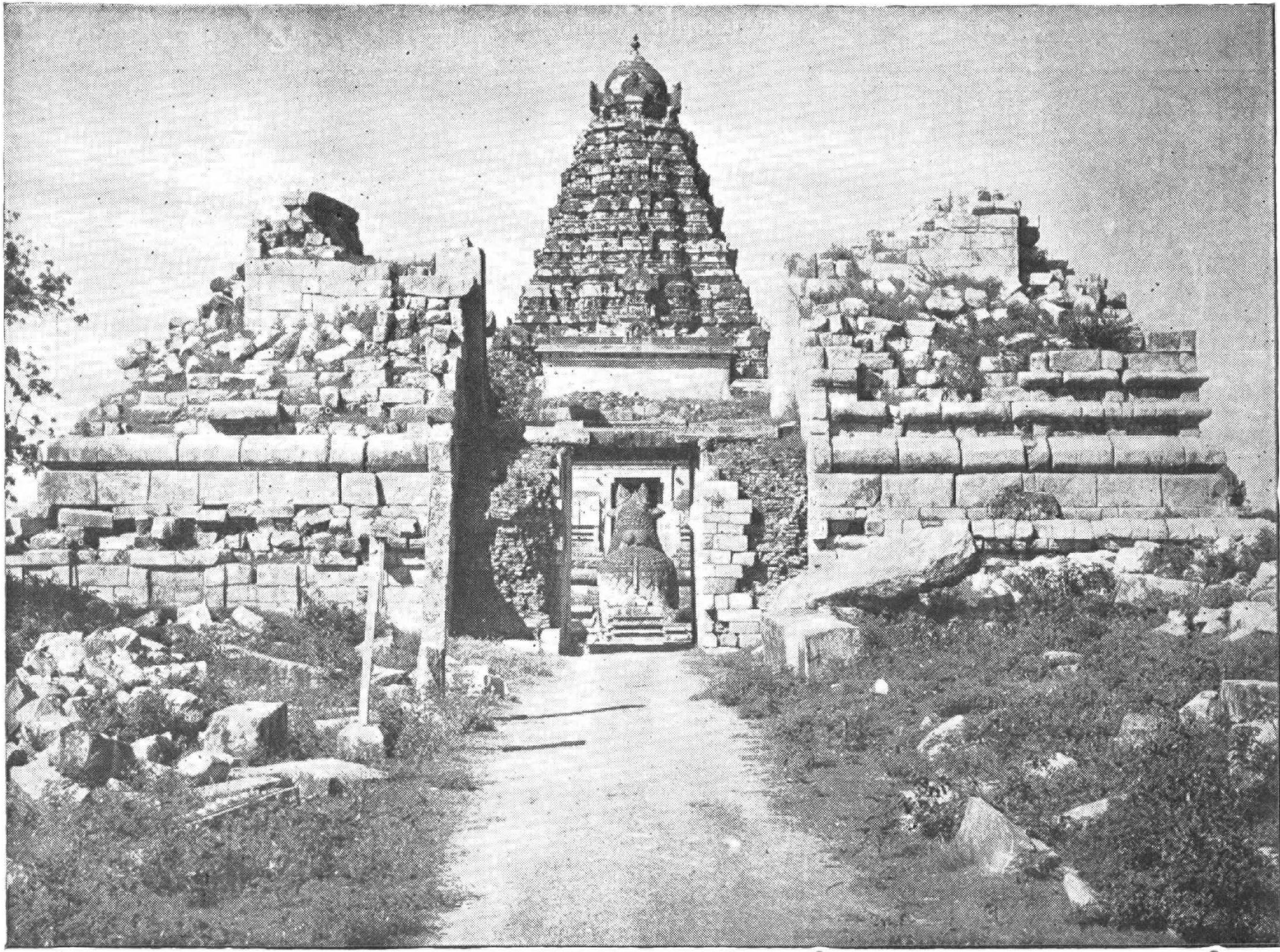
3. The main Vimāna. View from south-east



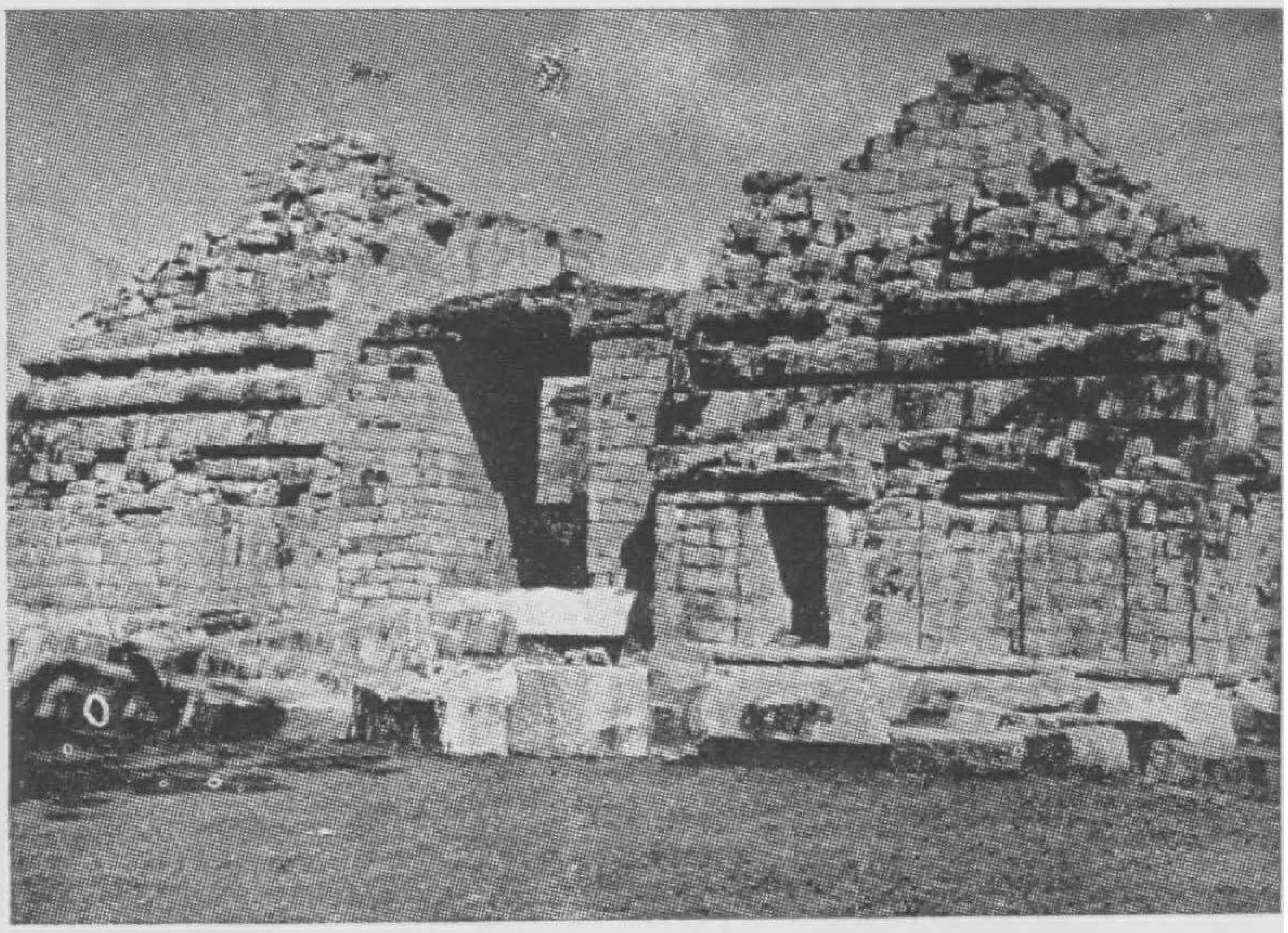
4. South wall of the vimāna



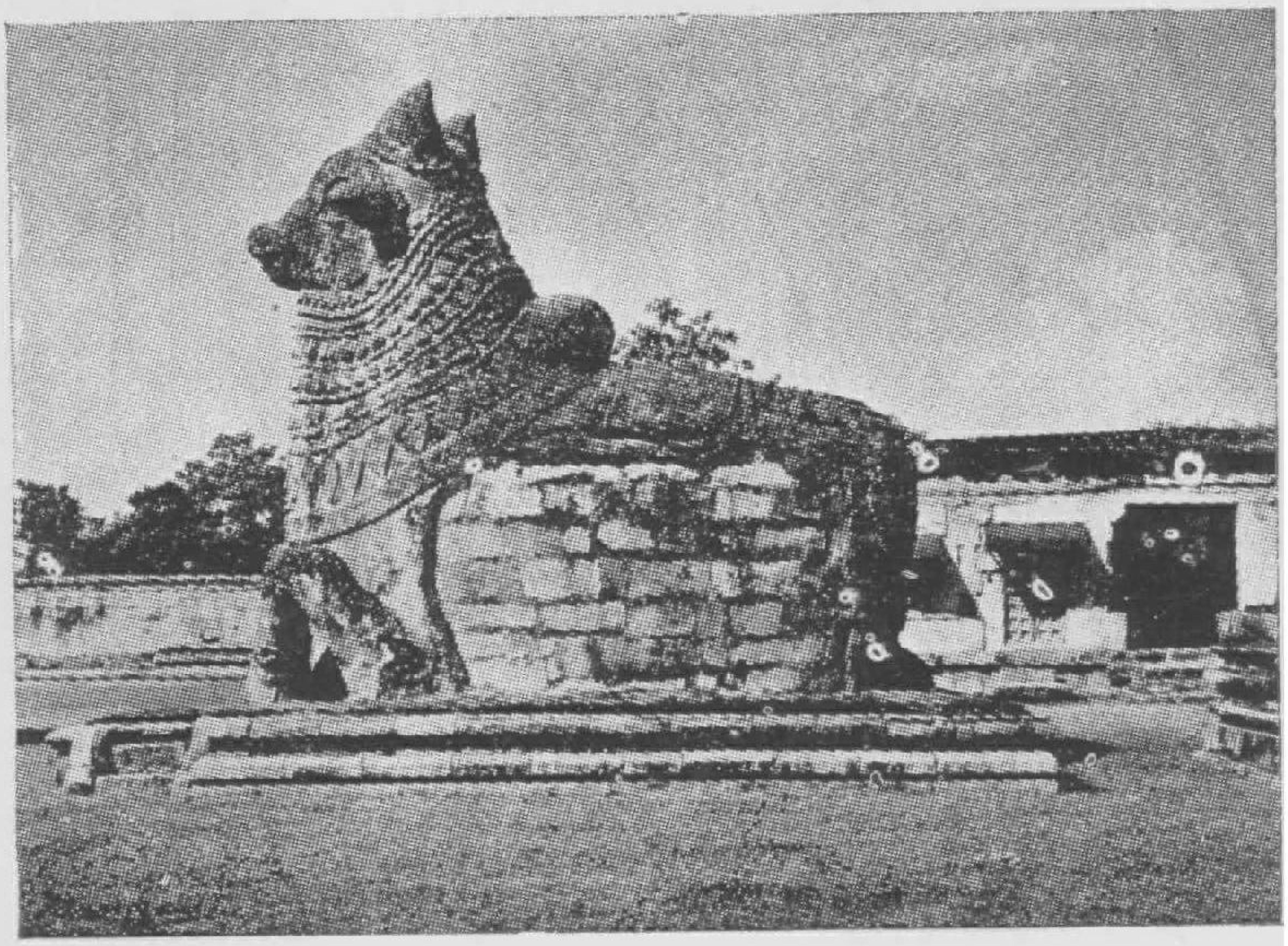
5. The outer southern wall



6. The dilapidated Gopura in the east



7. Gopura



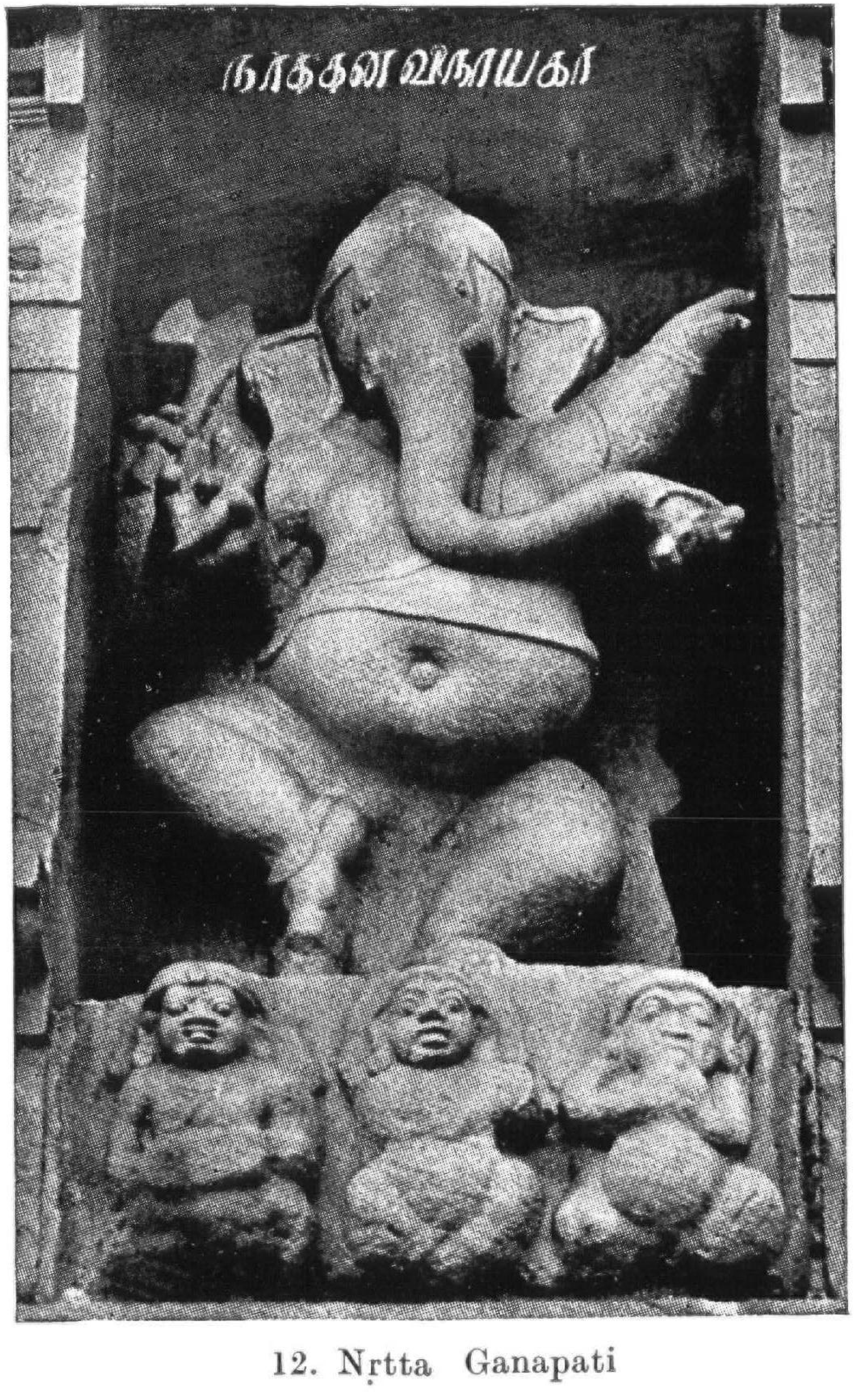
7A. Nandi

8. Simhakkeni. ("The lion well")

9. The Uttara Kailāsa (The temple of goddess).

10 Saraswati

11. Chaṇḍēśānugrahamūrti



12. Nṛtta Ganapati

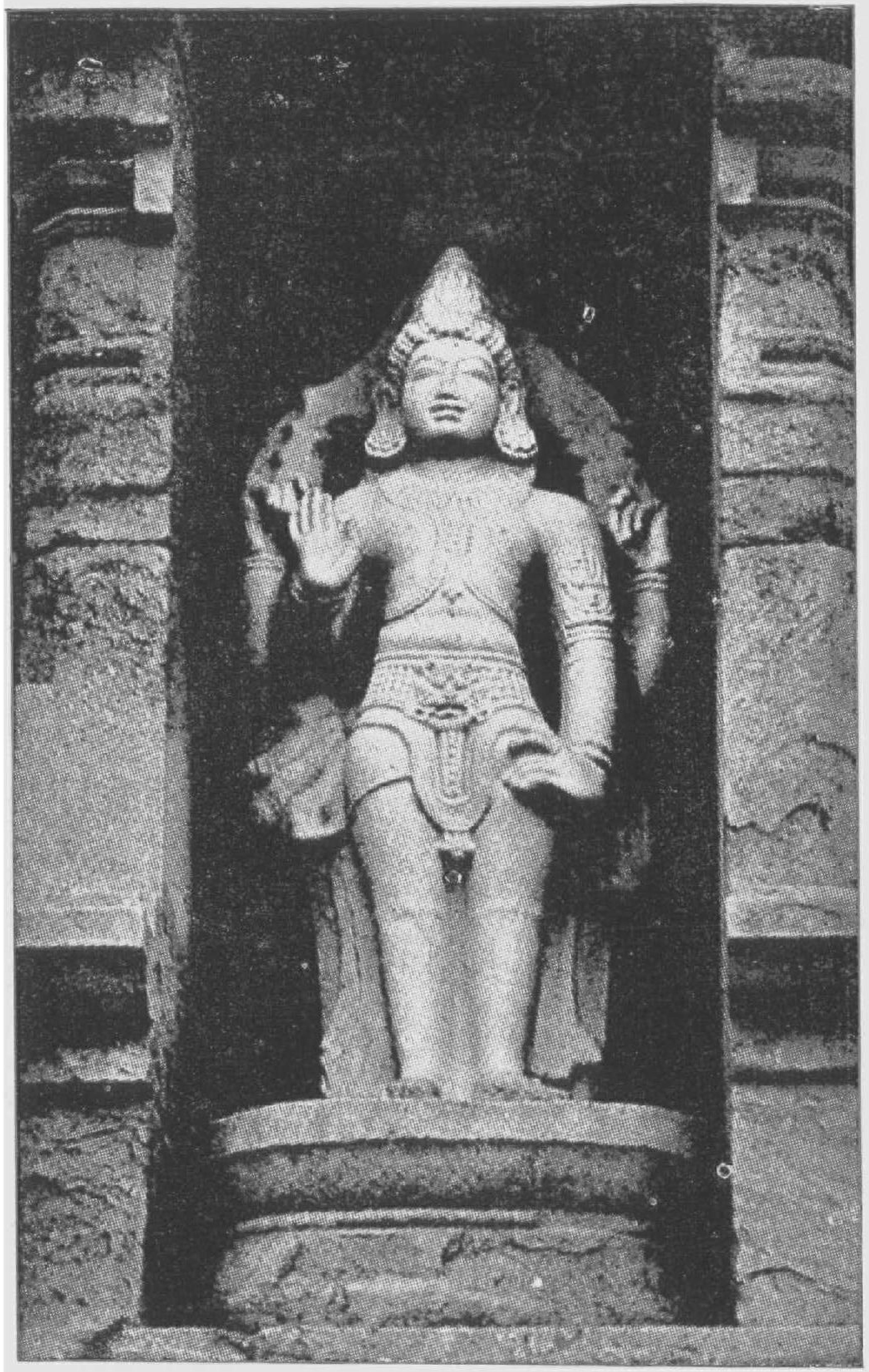
12-A. Ardhanāri

13. Harahari

13-A. Dakshiṇāmūrti

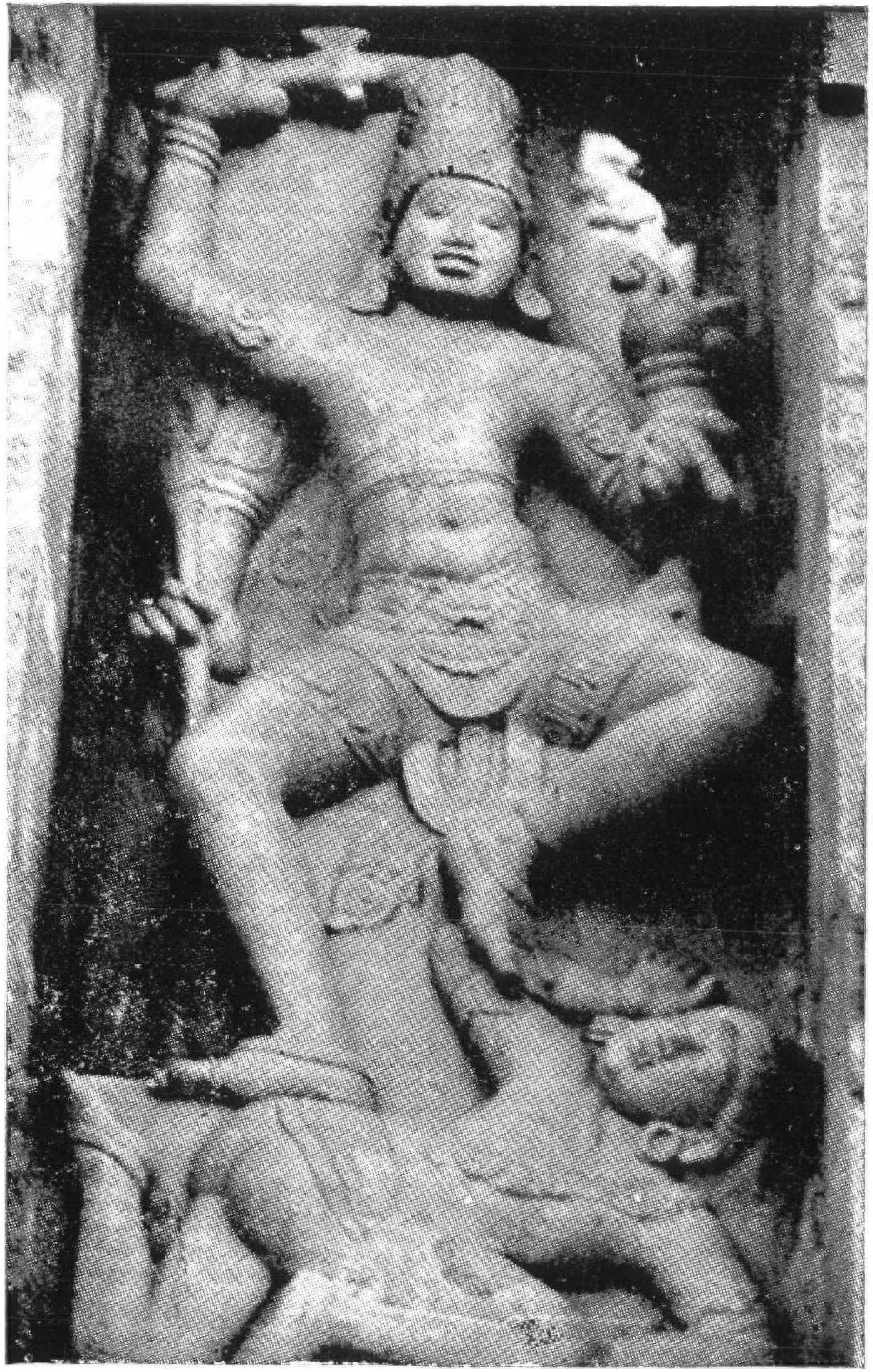
14. Āḍavallār

14-A. Gangādhara



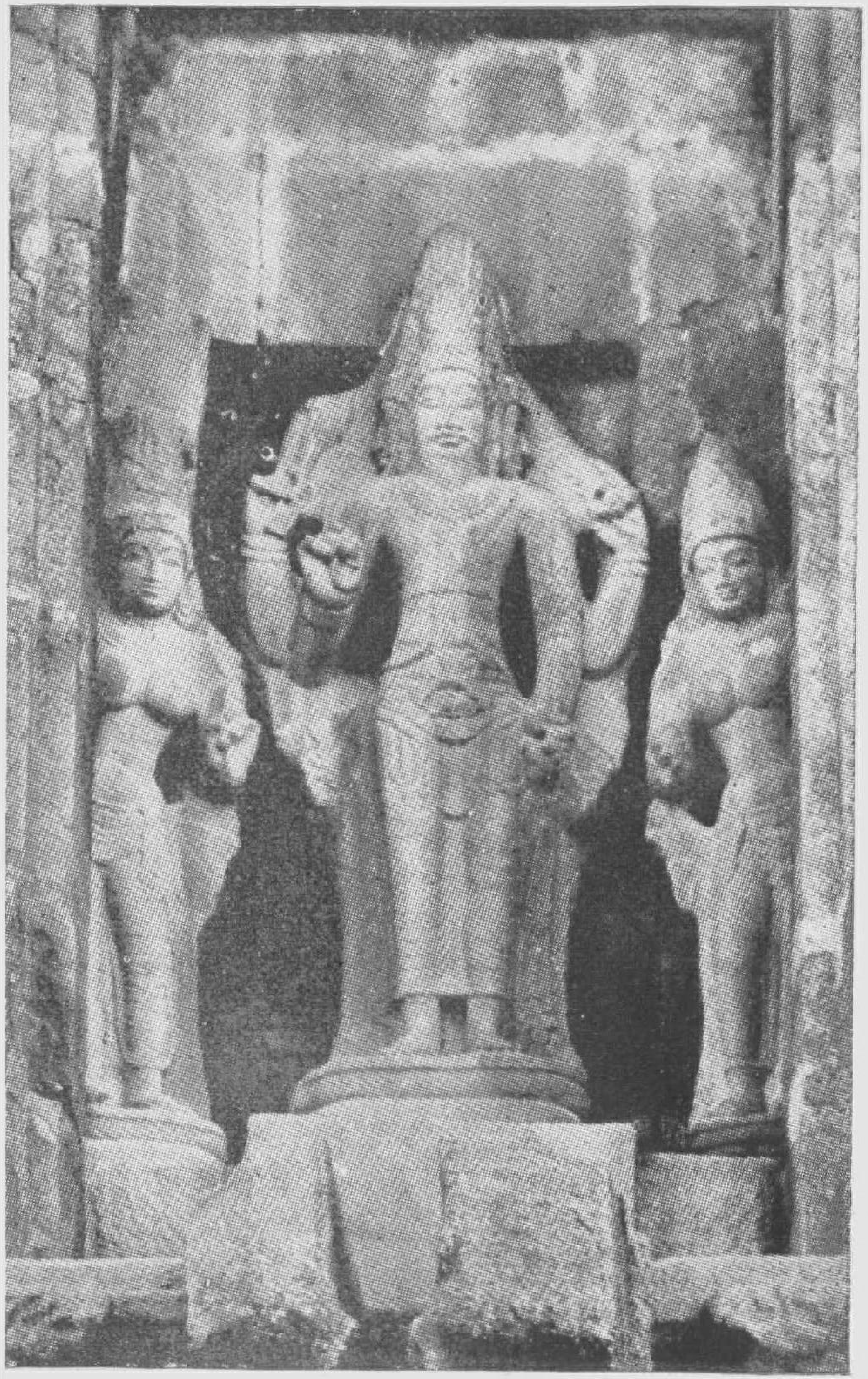
15. Subrahmaṇya

15-A. Chakradānamūrti

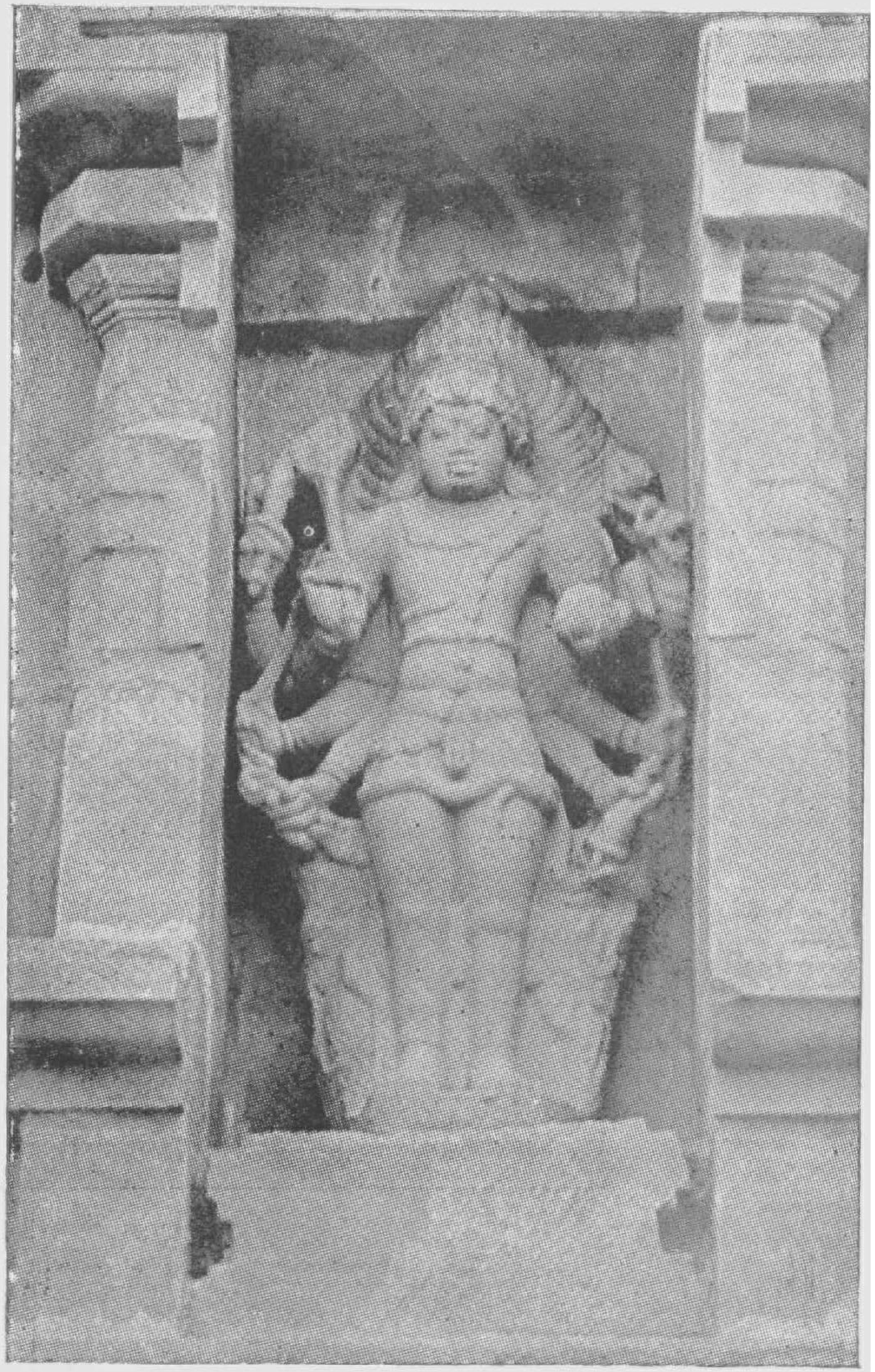


16. Kālāntaka

16-A. Durga



17. Brahmā with Sāvitri and Saraswati



17-A. Bhairava

18. Kāmāntaka

19. Lakshmi

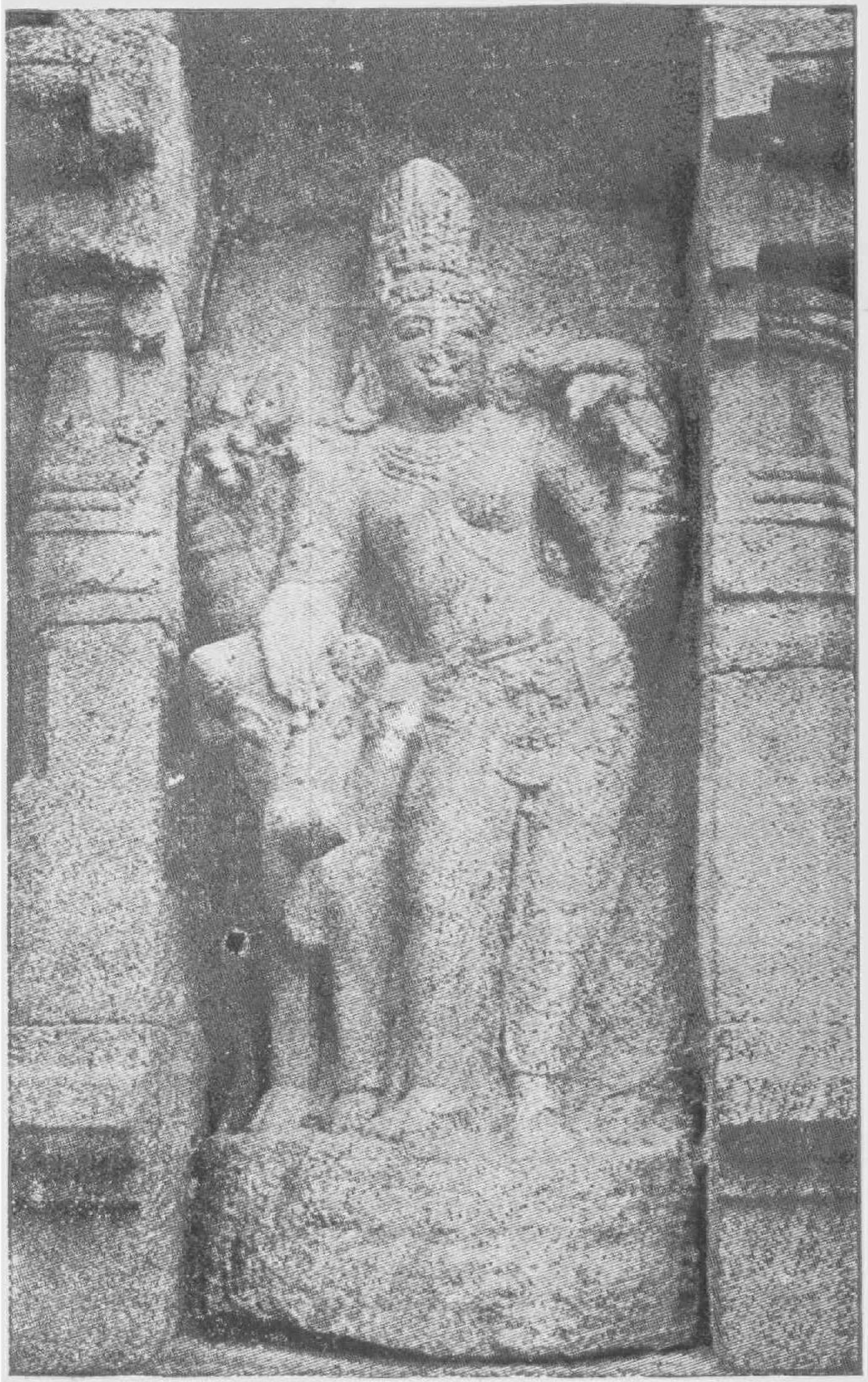
20. Dvārapāla guarding the north entrance to the ardhamaṇḍapa.

21. Dvārapāla guarding the south entrance to the ardhamaṇḍapa.

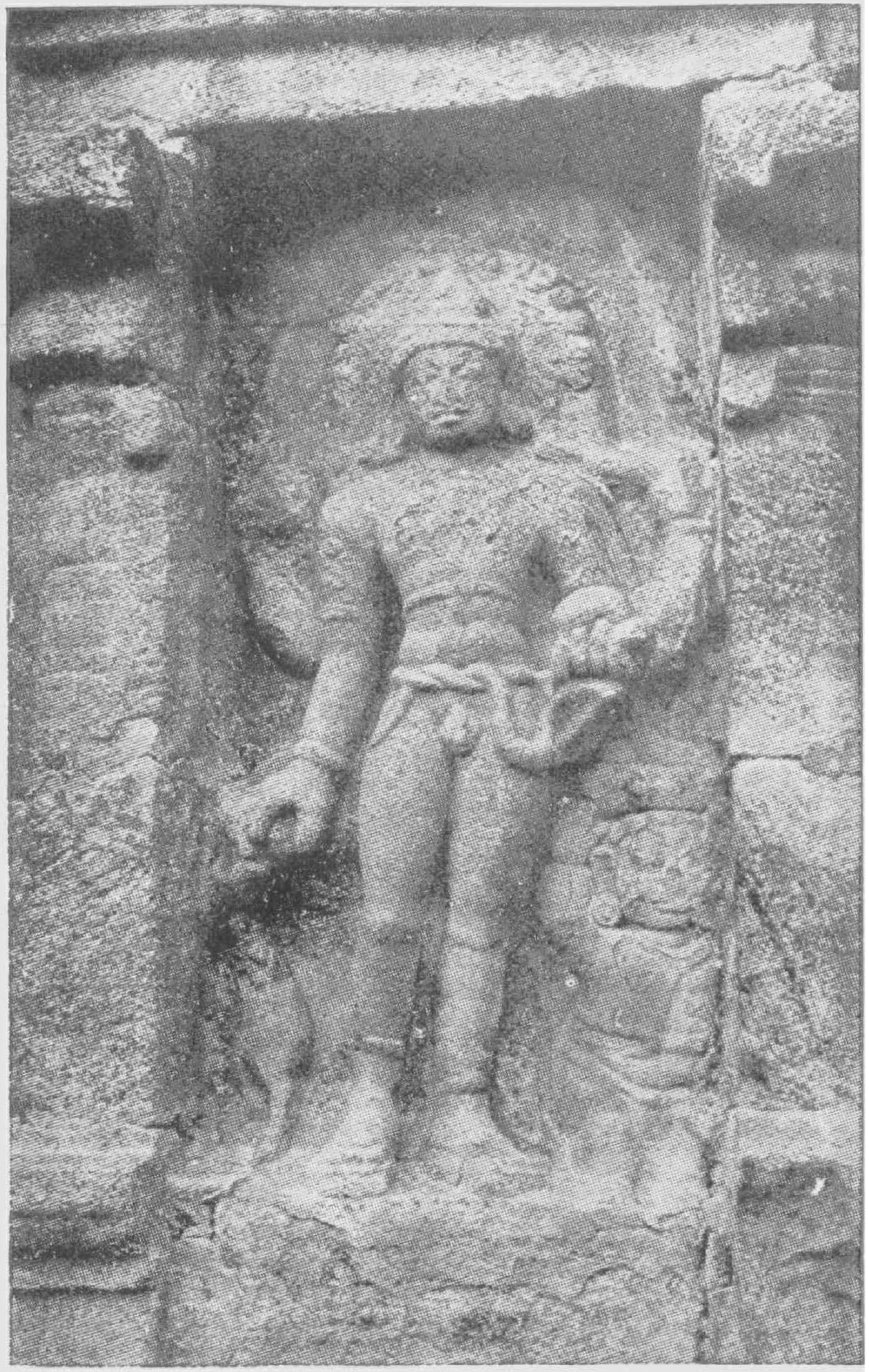
22. Āḍavallār

22-A. Subrahmaṇya

Dakshiṇa Kailāsa.



23. Ardhanāri



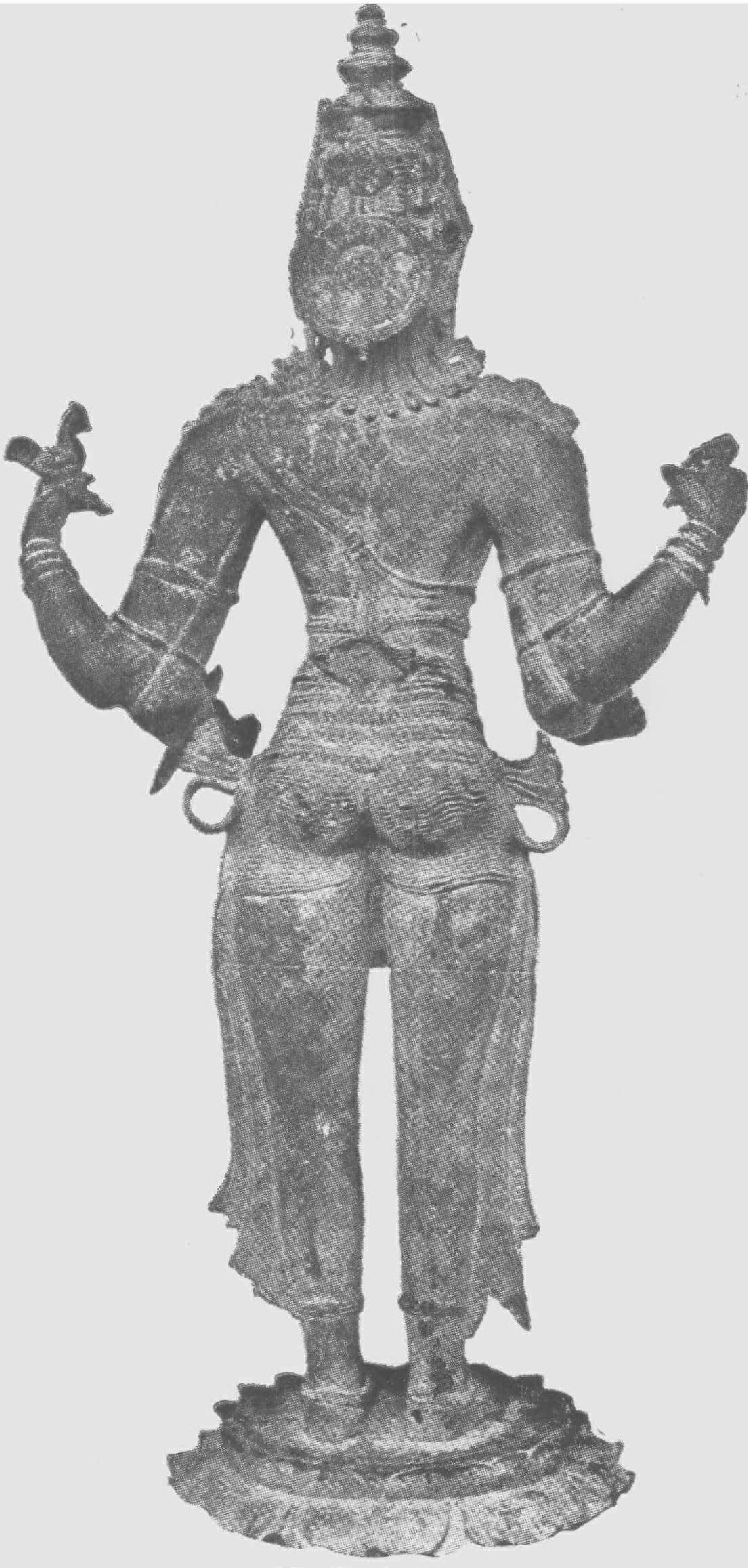
23-A. Bhikshāṭaṇa

Dakshina Kailāsa.

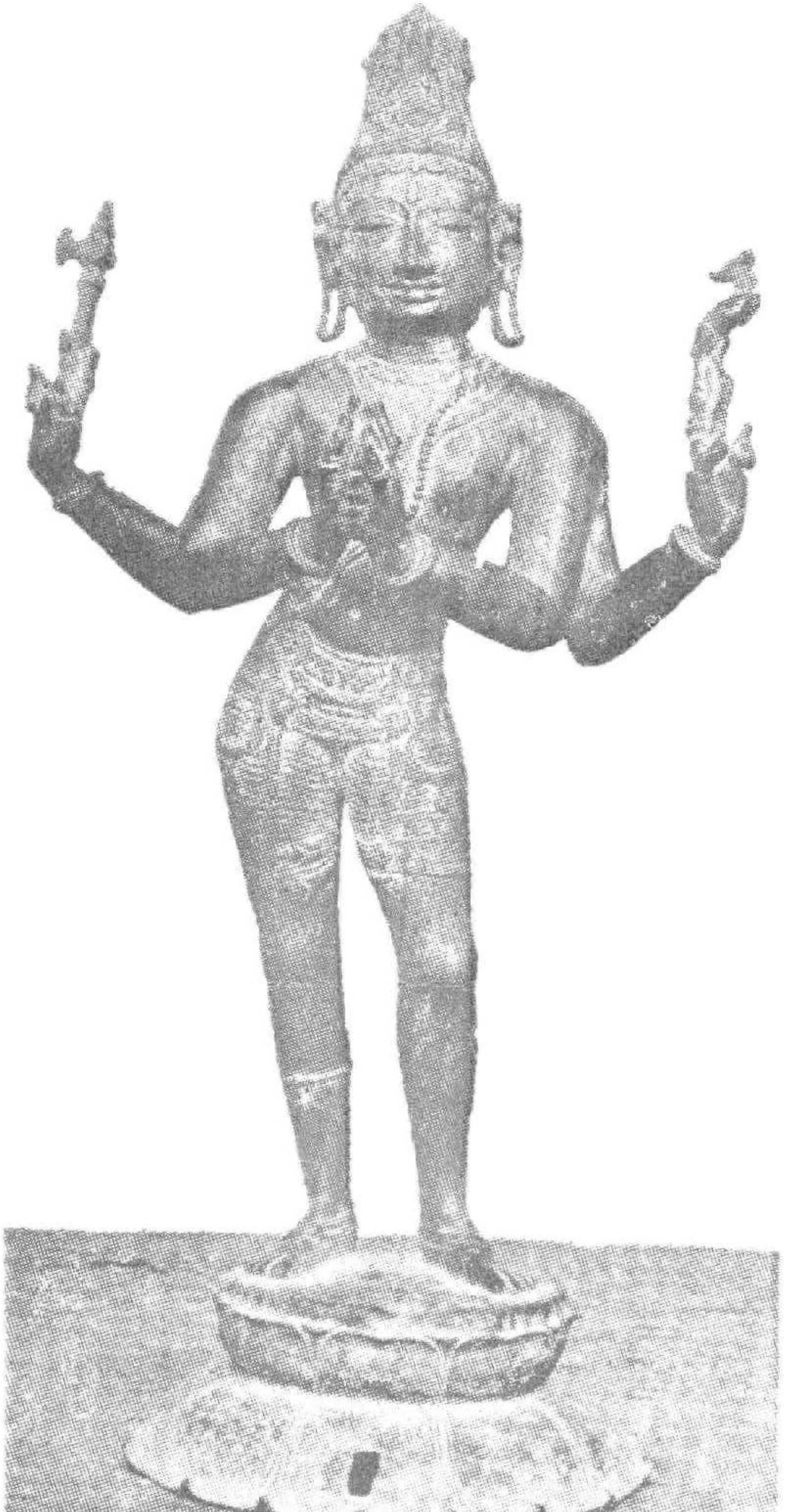
24. Dakshiṇāmūrti
Dakshiṇa Kailāsa.

76

26. Subrahmaṇya

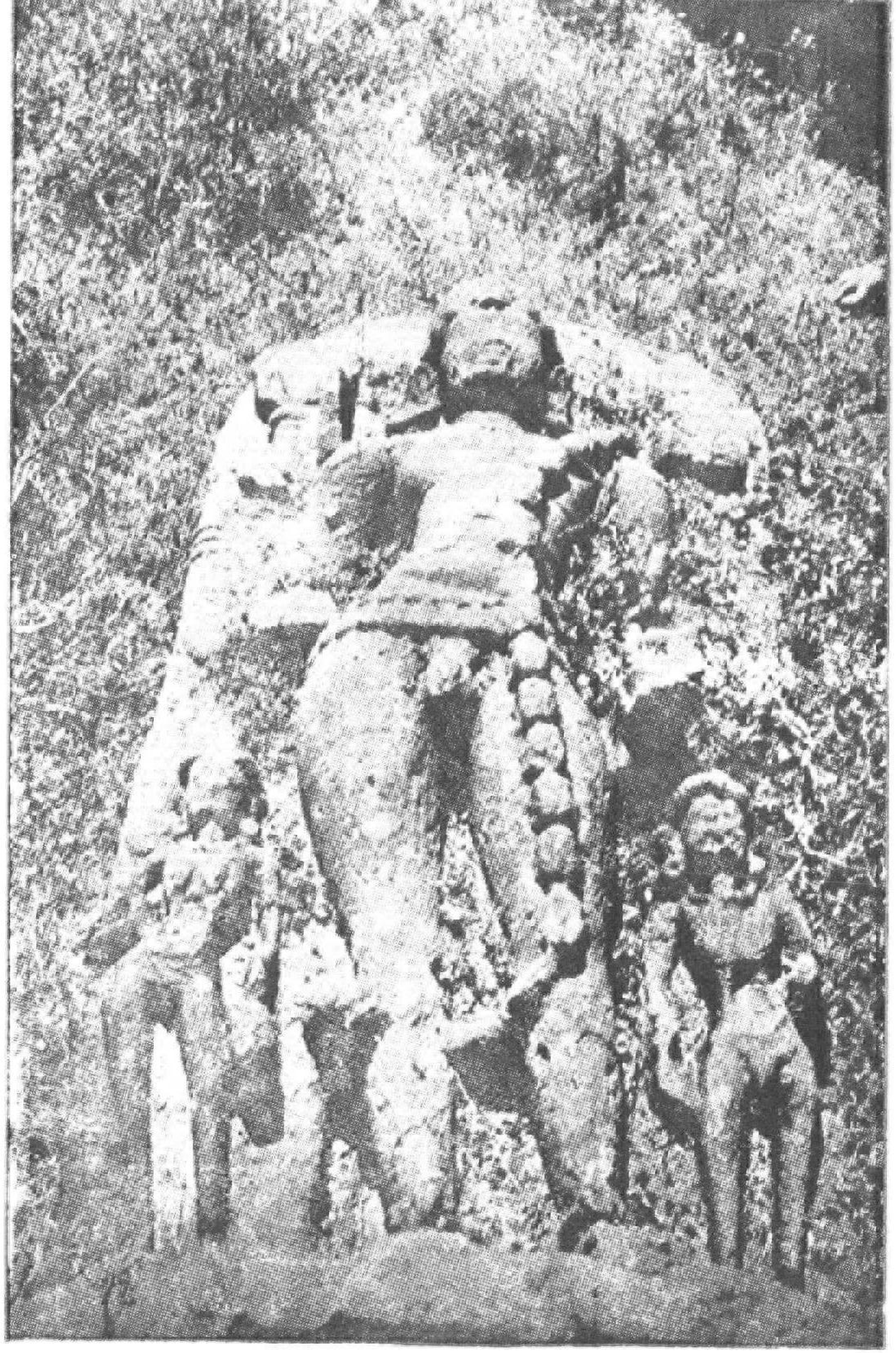


27. Back view



28. Adhikāranandi

29. Sundaramūrti

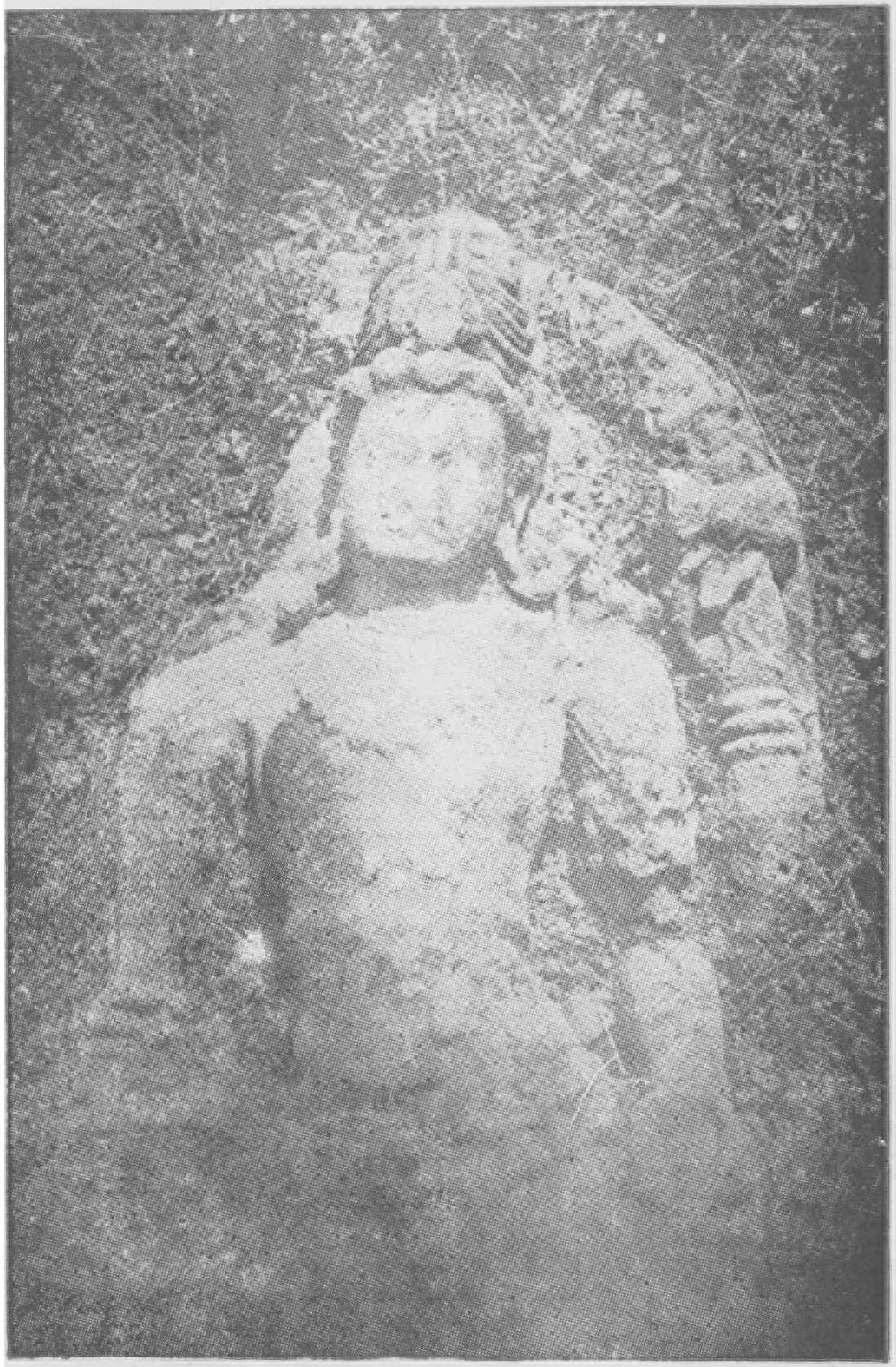


30. Bhairava

30-A. Bhairavi

Kalinga sculptures

Meykāvalputtur — Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram



31. Bhairava
Meykāvalputtur

31-A. Durga-Chālukya
Vīrareddy Street

32. The great Gangaikoṇḍachōḷan lake, also called Chōḷagangam.